WWF GEF GBFF Agency

Environmental and Social Management Framework & Process Framework & Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESMP	Environmental and Social Management Plan
ESS	Environmental and Social Safeguards
ESSF	Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework
EB	Executive Board of FTNS
FPIC	Free Prior and Informed Consent
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
IPP	Indigenous Peoples Plan
IPPF	Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework
LRP	Livelihood Restoration Plan
PAP	Project Affected People
PF	Process Framework
PSC	Project Steering Committee
SEAH	Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SIPP	Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

1. INTRODUCTION

Project Overview and Rationale

The **Sangha Tri-National (TNS) Landscape Conservation and Livelihoods Project** is a critical initiative aimed at ensuring the long-term preservation of one of the most ecologically significant and intact forest landscapes in Central Africa. Spanning the borders of **Cameroon, the Republic of Congo (RoC), and the Central African Republic (CAR)**, the TNS landscape encompasses 4.4 million hectares, including three contiguous protected areas: Lobéké National Park in Cameroon, Dzanga Sangha Protected Areas in CAR, and Nouabalé Ndoki National Park in RoC. The TNS is a globally significant biodiversity hotspot, home to endangered species such as forest elephants, lowland gorillas, and chimpanzees, as well as rich cultural and traditional knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs).

Despite its importance, the TNS faces numerous challenges, including deforestation, poaching, human-wildlife conflict, and socio-economic pressures on IPLCs. The project seeks to address these challenges by strengthening governance mechanisms, improving conservation outcomes, and ensuring equitable benefits for IPLCs, who depend on the forest for their livelihoods and cultural practices. By building on the Sangha Tri-National Trust Fund (FTNS), the project will ensure sustainable financing for conservation activities while enhancing the participation and capacities of local communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples.

Project Components

The project is structured around three interconnected components:

1. **Strengthening the Sangha Tri-National Trust Fund (FTNS):**
   o Enhancing the FTNS governance structure to align with international standards.
   o Developing robust policies, including Environmental and Social Safeguards (ESS) and gender mainstreaming.
   o Mobilizing additional financial resources to ensure the sustainable management of the TNS.

2. **Improved Conservation Management and Livelihoods:**
   o Strengthening the management effectiveness of the three protected areas through capacity-building, infrastructure development, and biodiversity monitoring.
   o Supporting IPLCs' participation in conservation activities and sustainable livelihoods through joint management agreements and capacity-building initiatives.

3. **Regional and Transboundary Collaboration:**
   o Enhancing transboundary cooperation among Cameroon, CAR, and RoC to harmonize conservation and management strategies.
   o Establishing platforms for collaboration on anti-poaching, land-use planning, and biodiversity monitoring.

Funding Amount and Source

The project is funded by the **Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF)**, with a total investment of 7,477,538 USD**.** Co-financing contributions from national governments, international donors, and private sector partners further reinforce the project's sustainability.

Safeguards Categorization and Required Plans

The project has been categorized as **Category B** under WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF), given the potential for moderate environmental and social impacts that can be effectively managed. To ensure compliance with safeguard standards, the following plans will be developed and implemented:

- **Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP):** To protect the rights, cultural heritage, and livelihoods of IPLCs while ensuring their meaningful participation in project activities.

- **Livelihood Management Plan (LMP):** To mitigate any adverse impacts on access to natural resources and support alternative livelihoods for affected communities.

- **Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF):** To guide the identification and mitigation of risks associated with project activities.

Implementing and Executing Agency

The project is managed by **WWF**, serving as the implementing agency, in partnership with the **Sangha Tri-National Trust Fund (FTNS)** as the primary executing entity. FTNS is responsible for coordinating conservation efforts, managing financial resources, and ensuring the inclusion of local stakeholders in project implementation. Together, these entities will collaborate with national governments, civil society organizations, and local communities to achieve the project's objectives.

This holistic approach ensures that the TNS landscape remains a thriving ecological and cultural sanctuary while fostering sustainable development and resilience among its local communities.

1.1. Objective of the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

The preparation of this ESMF was required in accordance with the WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF), through guidance and procedures described in WWF's Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP), in order to identify and manage the environmental and social risks and impacts of the FTNS project. The ESMF aims to outline the principles, procedures, and mitigation measures for addressing environmental and social impacts associated with the project in accordance with the laws and regulations of Cameroon, RoC, CAR and with the ESSF.

Since the precise scope of activities to be funded by FTNS through the project and that will be implemented as part of the project will only be determined during the implementation phase, site-specific social and environmental impacts are uncertain at this stage. Thus, the development of site-specific Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESMPs) is currently not feasible, and an ESMF is necessary to set out procedures for addressing potential adverse social and environmental impacts that may occur during project activities. Site-specific ESMPs will be developed pursuant to the guidance provided by this ESMF during project implementation.

The specific objectives of the ESMF include the following:

- Carry out a preliminary identification of the positive and negative social and environmental impacts and risks associated with the implementation of the Project, including any SEAH risks;

- Outline the legal and regulatory framework that is relevant to the Project implementation;

- Specify appropriate roles and responsibilities of actors and parties involved in the ESMF implementation;

- Propose a set of preliminary recommendations and measures to mitigate any negative impacts and enhance positive impacts;

- Develop a screening and assessment methodology for potential activities, that will allow an environmental/social risk classification and the identification of appropriate safeguards instruments;

- Set out procedures to establish mechanisms to monitor the implementation and efficacy of the proposed mitigation measures; and

- Outline requirements related to disclosure, grievance redress, capacity building activities, and budget required for the implementation of the ESMF.

1.2.   Objective of the Process Framework (PF)

The Project triggers the WWF's Standard on Access Restriction and Resettlement as it may restrict or otherwise affect access to natural resources and the livelihood activities of project affected people (PAP). This Process Framework (PF) describes the process by which affected communities participate in identification, design, implementation and monitoring of relevant project activities and mitigation measures. The purpose of this PF is to ensure participation of Project Affected People (PAP) while recognizing and protecting their rights and interests and ensuring that they do not become worse off as a result of the project. Specifically, the PF will:

- Describe activities that may involve new or more stringent restrictions on use of natural resources in the project area.

- Establish the mechanism through which the local communities can contribute to the project design, implementation and monitoring.

- Identify the potential negative impacts of the restriction on the surrounding communities, including any gendered differences or SEAH risks associated with access restriction or differing uses of natural resources.

- Specify the criteria for eligibility of economically displaced persons to receive compensation benefits and development assistance (no physical displacement will be allowed under this project or any WWF project).

- Describe the mitigation measures required to assist the economically displaced persons in their efforts to improve their livelihoods, or at least to restore them, in real terms, while maintaining the sustainability of the landscape, will be identified.

- Describe the grievance procedure or process for resolving disputes to natural resource use restrictions.

- Describe the participatory monitoring arrangements with neighboring community members.

As the project intends to enhance the livelihoods and resilience of IPs and local communities, the allocation of project benefits among local community members is particularly important. The intent of the framework is to ensure transparency and equity in the planning and implementation of activities by the project. This framework details the principles and processes for assisting communities to identify and manage any potential negative impacts of the project activities. Since the exact social impacts will only be identified during project implementation, the PF will ensure that mitigation of any negative impacts from project investments occurs through a participatory process involving the affected stakeholders and rightsholders. It will also ensure that any desired changes by the communities in the ways in which IPs exercise customary tenure rights in the project sites would not be imposed, but should emerge from a consultative process.

1.3. Objective of the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)

The target project areas include Indigenous communities. The Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape is home to diverse groups often referred to under various names (Ba'Aka, Baka, Babendjele, etc.), but who collectively prefer to be identified as "Indigenous peoples" (or "peuples autochtones" in French). These groups share common cultural traits and belong to the Central African Pygmy peoples. For simplicity, this document will use the term "Indigenous peoples," which is widely understood across the three countries.

These communities, primarily hunter-gatherers, depend deeply on forest resources for their livelihoods and cultural practices. Their unparalleled ecological knowledge reflects a profound connection to their environment. However, they face significant social and political marginalization, alongside challenges in securing access to land and resources. Semi-nomadic by nature, their rich cultural heritage and forest expertise are vital yet often undervalued.

These semi-nomadic forest-dependent peoples have lived in the region for generations, relying on the forest for their livelihoods, cultural identity, and spiritual practices. Known for their deep ecological knowledge, they are skilled in sustainable hunting, gathering of non-timber forest products, and traditional medicine. Despite their essential role in forest stewardship, these groups face significant challenges, including land tenure insecurity, marginalization, and limited access to education, healthcare, and decision-making processes, particularly in conservation initiatives within the TNS. Based on WWF's Standard on IPs, the people affected by this project would thus be considered Indigenous, ethnic or tribal minorities. An Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework thus has to be prepared.

The objective of the IPs Planning Framework (IPPF) is to clarify the principles, procedures and organizational arrangements to be applied to IPs for the FTNS project. This framework will serve as a guideline to the project team to:

- Enable them to prepare an IPs Plans (IPPs) for specific activities proposed consistent with WWF's Environment and Social Safeguard Integrated Policies and Procedures.

- Engage affected IPs in a Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) process.

- Enable IPs to benefit equitably from the project.

1.4. ESMF/PF/IPPF Preparation Methodology

The ESMF/PF/IPPF was prepared based on a comprehensive methodology that included calls with responsible officers from each of the three parks within the Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape, enabling the collection of critical insights into park-specific management practices and challenges. It also involved the review of management and safeguard documents from these parks to ensure alignment with existing protocols and experiences. Additionally, consultations were conducted through calls and emails with Indigenous groups to incorporate their perspectives on the landscape, as well as a workshop held in Cameroon with representatives of civil society organization (CSO) networks. These activities provided valuable knowledge on the landscape, identified potential risks, and informed the development of mitigation measures. The ESMF/PF/IPPF draws on the results of these consultations and the relevant laws and regulations of Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), and the Republic of Congo (RoC), as well as WWF's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) and Standards on Indigenous Peoples and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent found in the SIPP. The relevant national safeguards laws and regulations apply as the project is implemented within the jurisdictions of these countries, while WWF's SIPP standards apply since the project is managed by WWF, an implementing agency of the GEF Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF).

In order to avoid duplications and for ease of reference, the ESMF, PF, and IPPF are combined into a single document.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This chapter outlines the objectives of the FTNS project, its components, milestones, and major supported activities.

2.1. Project Objectives and Components

Project Objective

The primary objective of the project is to provide sustainable, long-term investment in the globally significant Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape, which spans Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), and the Republic of Congo (RoC). By reinforcing the TNS Foundation (Fondation Tri-National de la Sangha, FTNS)—a fiduciary fund dedicated to supporting biodiversity conservation and the well-being of local populations—the project aims to strengthen governance, financial sustainability, and participatory management of the TNS. This involves improving the management effectiveness of three connected protected areas (PAs), enhancing transboundary cooperation, and ensuring the inclusion and empowerment of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in conservation efforts. The project seeks to contribute to the 30x30 conservation goals of the participating countries by maintaining the integrity, connectivity, and resilience of the TNS ecosystem.

Project Components

Component 1: Strengthening FTNS Governance and Operational Capacity

- **Outcome 1.1**: FTNS evolves to meet international standards for operational Conservation Trust Funds (CTFs) and donor prerequisites for additional funding.
    - **Activities**:
        - **Improving Governance Structures**: Develop and adopt bylaws for the Board of Directors (BoD) and Investment Committee, clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and procedures. This includes enhancing representation of IPLCs and ensuring gender diversity within governance bodies.
        - **Operationalizing the Investment Committee**: Strengthen the Investment Committee by defining its composition, appointing members with financial expertise, and ensuring regular meetings to oversee investment activities.
        - **Capacity Building**: Provide training for BoD members and staff on fiduciary duties, environmental and social safeguards (ESS), gender inclusion, risk management, and IPLC engagement to enhance effective governance.
        - **Strategic Planning**: Develop and adopt a comprehensive strategic plan and operational manual (MoO) for FTNS, including policies on ESS, gender equality, risk management, and grant procedures.
        - **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)**: Establish a robust M&E system to track implementation of the strategic plan, including key performance indicators (KPIs) related to conservation outcomes and IPLC participation.

Component 2: Mobilization of Additional Resources

- **Outcome 2.1**: The FTNS endowment fund is capitalized, contributing to a more effective and inclusive management of the TNS landscape.

    o **Activities**:

        ▪ **Capitalizing the Endowment Fund**: Upon meeting the prerequisites established in Component 1, FTNS will receive additional funding from the Global Biodiversity Framework Fund (GBFF) to strengthen its endowment, with clear earmarking of GBFF funds for priority activities.

        ▪ **Due Diligence and Compliance**: Conduct external financial audits and due diligence to ensure transparency and accountability before the transfer of GBFF funds.

        ▪ **Formal Agreements**: Sign agreements between FTNS and WWF-GEF, outlining procurement processes, investment strategies, management of GBFF funds, and compliance with international best practices.

Component 3: Enhancing Management Effectiveness through Inclusive Approaches

- **Outcome 3.1**: FTNS financially contributes to conservation objectives and the engagement of IPLCs.

    o **Activities**:

        ▪ **Integrating ESS and Gender Policies at PA Level**: Conduct comprehensive audits on ESS, gender practices, grievance redress mechanisms (GRM), and IPLC engagement at the national segment level. Develop action plans to address gaps and strengthen capacities of PA personnel for effective implementation.

        ▪ **Strengthening Governance Bodies**: Support the revitalization and operationalization of governance bodies at both national and transboundary levels (e.g., CTSA, CTPE, Local Advisory Boards), ensuring inclusion of IPLC representatives and gender responsiveness.

        ▪ **Community Engagement**: Establish and support local consultative platforms for IPLCs to participate in decision-making processes related to PA management, land-use planning, and conservation activities.

        ▪ **Monitoring and Reporting**: Implement mechanisms to monitor and report on the implementation of ESS, gender inclusion, and GRM, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.

Component 4: Promoting Transboundary Cooperation and Regional Collaboration

- **Outcome 4.1**: Enhanced transboundary cooperation contributes to the integrity and resilience of the TNS ecosystem.

    o **Activities**:

        ▪ **Facilitating Cross-Border Initiatives**: Support joint anti-poaching operations, biodiversity monitoring, and data sharing among the three countries to address illegal wildlife trade and trafficking effectively.

        ▪ **Harmonizing Policies and Legislation**: Work towards aligning conservation policies, legal frameworks, and enforcement mechanisms across the TNS landscape to ensure cohesive management strategies.

- **Capacity Building**: Provide training and capacity-building programs for park staff, ecoguards, and community members to improve collaborative management efforts and promote sustainable practices.

Expected Outcomes

1. **Improved Governance and Financial Sustainability**: FTNS operates under strengthened governance structures, meeting international CTF standards, and is financially capable of supporting conservation activities in the TNS.

2. **Enhanced Conservation Outcomes**: Effective management of the three PAs leads to improved biodiversity conservation, reduced poaching, and mitigated human-wildlife conflicts.

3. **Inclusive Participation of IPLCs**: Indigenous Peoples and local communities are actively involved in governance and management processes, benefiting from equitable sharing of conservation benefits and improved livelihoods.

4. **Strengthened Transboundary Cooperation**: Improved collaboration among Cameroon, CAR, and RoC enhances overall management effectiveness of the TNS landscape.

5. **Compliance with Environmental and Social Safeguards**: Implementation of robust ESS and gender policies ensures that conservation activities are socially responsible, culturally sensitive, and protect the rights of IPLCs.

Alignment with National and International Priorities

The project aligns with the conservation objectives of Cameroon, CAR, and RoC, contributing to their commitments under international conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's 30x30 goal. By reinforcing FTNS and fostering inclusive governance, the project supports the sustainable management of one of Central Africa's most critical ecosystems, preserving its rich biodiversity and promoting socio-economic resilience among local and Indigenous communities.

Conclusion

Through these components, the project aims to establish a robust foundation for long-term conservation efforts in the TNS landscape by strengthening the FTNS's governance and financial capacity, ensuring inclusive participation of IPLCs, enhancing transboundary cooperation, and aligning with international environmental standards. This integrated approach is expected to result in significant global environmental benefits, including the preservation of critical habitats, protection of endangered species, and contribution to global biodiversity targets.

2.2. Project Area Profile

The TNS landscape is a globally significant biodiversity hotspot with immense ecological, cultural, and economic value. However, it faces mounting pressures from resource exploitation, social marginalization, and governance challenges. Strengthening participatory management, ensuring sustainable livelihoods, and addressing environmental threats are critical to preserving this unique ecosystem and improving the well-being of its human and ecological communities.

Geographic and Environmental Context

The Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape is a 4.4-million-hectare transboundary area in the Congo Basin, shared by Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), and the Republic of Congo (RoC). It comprises three contiguous protected areas (PAs): **Lobéké National Park (Cameroon)**, **Dzanga-Sangha Protected Area Complex (CAR)**, and **Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park (RoC)**. These PAs collectively cover 1,328,278 hectares and are surrounded by buffer zones including logging concessions, community forests, hunting zones, and rural settlements.

The TNS landscape is recognized for its exceptional ecological integrity, with approximately 70% of the area considered virtually intact and 30% under advanced regeneration. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a Ramsar-listed area, underlining its global significance for biodiversity conservation. The landscape is characterized by interconnected lowland tropical rainforests, ranging from semi-deciduous forests in the northwest to swamp forests in the southeast. Unique natural features include ecologically remarkable forest clearings, known as **bais** and **yangas**, which act as wildlife aggregation hotspots. For example, Dzanga Bai hosts hundreds of forest elephants daily, a phenomenon unique to this site.

The climate is transitional between Congolo-equatorial and sub-equatorial zones, with an annual rainfall of 1,365–1,600 mm, high humidity (60–90%), and temperatures averaging 24–26°C. The area experiences two rainy seasons (August–November, March–May) and two dry seasons (December–February, June–July).

Biological Context

The TNS landscape is one of the most biodiverse regions in Central Africa, hosting an extraordinary array of flora and fauna:

- **Fauna:**
  - Mammals: The region is home to 340 species, including critically endangered and flagship species such as forest elephants (*Loxodonta africana cyclotis*), lowland gorillas (*Gorilla gorilla gorilla*), chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*), and bongos (*Tragelaphus euryceros*). Unique behavioral traits, such as tool use among chimpanzees and gorillas, have been observed in TNS populations.
  - Birds: Over 920 species, including endemic and migratory birds, thrive in the landscape.
  - Reptiles: The region supports 274 reptile species.
  - The landscape's iconic clearings (bais) act as vital hubs for interspecies interactions and genetic exchange, ensuring the survival of key populations.

- **Flora:**
  - Representative of Congo Basin flora, the TNS harbors rare and endangered species, such as *Autranella congolensis*, a tree valued for its commercial and ecological importance.
  - Local Indigenous Peoples contribute to reforestation and forest restoration, particularly in degraded areas like abandoned logging concessions, with notable initiatives in the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic. These efforts are rooted in traditional knowledge and require further documentation and support.

Climate Change and Community Adaptations

The TNS region faces increasing climate risks, including irregular precipitation, prolonged droughts, and degraded soils. Local communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples, have implemented innovative practices to adapt to these changes:

- **Sustainable Practices:**
  - Indigenous communities have revitalized *fossés claniques* (clan-based river channels) to facilitate fish reproduction during the dry season, addressing shortages

of aquatic resources. This initiative is ongoing and highlights the importance of traditional ecological knowledge in maintaining biodiversity.

- o Agroforestry and reforestation projects are gaining traction to restore degraded forests and maintain soil health. These efforts integrate traditional techniques with modern agro-ecological practices.

- o Small-scale initiatives promoting the use of organic fertilizers, derived from traditional knowledge, are emerging and require further support.

- **Challenges:**

  - o Agricultural practices have yet to fully adapt to irregular rainfall and prolonged droughts, with limited visible changes on the ground. Local civil society organizations are encouraging a transition from slash-and-burn agriculture to more sustainable agro-ecological methods.

  - o Soil erosion and loss of organic matter remain critical issues, though community-driven efforts to combat these challenges are still in early stages.

Pollution and Environmental Threats

Pollution, primarily linked to external actors such as mining companies, poses significant threats to the TNS's waterways and ecosystems. While local pollution from plastic waste is less prominent, initiatives like the Ndima Kali project in the Central African Republic, where young Indigenous individuals collect plastic waste from forests and villages, showcase community-driven solutions to environmental challenges. These efforts highlight the need for increased awareness and resources to address pollution and waste management comprehensively.

Infrastructure Vulnerabilities

Climate-related hazards, such as heavy rains and strong winds, have severely impacted the region's infrastructure, particularly roads and trails. Seasonal floods and damage caused by logging trucks exacerbate these challenges. Community-led resilience-building efforts, although currently limited, present opportunities for innovative approaches to infrastructure development.

By integrating community knowledge, supporting sustainable practices, and addressing pollution and infrastructure vulnerabilities, conservation efforts in the TNS can ensure the preservation of its biodiversity while enhancing the resilience of its people and ecosystems.

Social Context

The TNS is home to an estimated 55,000 people, with an average population density of 2 inhabitants/km^2. The population includes:

- Indigenous Peoples: Approximately 10% of the population. These groups share hunter-gatherer traditions and a deep connection to the forest. They rely on it for sustenance, medicinal plants, and spiritual practices. Despite their rich ecological knowledge and cultural heritage, Indigenous Peoples face systemic marginalization, including limited representation in governance, restricted access to traditional lands, and discrimination by neighboring Bantu communities.

- Bantu Communities: Representing 90% of the population, these communities primarily engage in farming, trade, and labor in forestry and mining.

Indigenous Peoples in the TNS often endure forced sedentarization, with many working as laborers for Bantu farmers or resorting to activities like bushmeat hunting due to restricted livelihood options. Their rights are further undermined by unequal benefit-sharing mechanisms, limited access to protected resources, and the undervaluation of their traditional knowledge and cultural identity. International texts, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Paris Agreement, call for the recognition and inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' rights, yet implementation gaps remain.

Women and youth, particularly among Indigenous Peoples and local communities (IPLCs), face compounded vulnerabilities, including limited access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. The involvement of these groups in project governance and decision-making is essential to ensure equitable outcomes. Proposed measures include:

- Establishing accessible and well-funded grievance mechanisms, managed by Indigenous-led bodies or independent organizations.

- Encouraging active participation of Indigenous Peoples in decision-making processes.

- Promoting sustainable livelihoods and preserving intergenerational knowledge through the valorization of traditional practices, ensuring respect for Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).

Efforts to integrate Indigenous Peoples' perspectives and practices could lead to improved conservation outcomes and greater social equity.

Economic Context

The TNS economy is predominantly resource-dependent, with significant reliance on forest resources for subsistence and income:

1. **Forestry**:

   o The landscape includes logging concessions, some of which are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified. Logging contributes to local employment but poses risks to biodiversity through deforestation and habitat fragmentation.

2. **Bushmeat Hunting**:

   o A vital source of protein and income for communities. However, increased demand from urban markets and logging/mining camps has led to unsustainable practices, threatening wildlife populations.

3. **Agriculture**:

   o Shifting agriculture farming is common, with crops such as cassava, plantain, and maize. Cocoa is the main cash crop, cultivated primarily by Bantu farmers. Agricultural expansion contributes to habitat loss and human-wildlife conflict.

4. **Mining**:

   o Artisanal mining for gold and diamonds is widespread but mostly illegal, causing deforestation and pollution of waterways.

5. **Fishing and Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)**:

    o Rivers such as the Sangha and Ndoki provide fish, an alternative protein source to bushmeat. NTFPs, including mushrooms, caterpillars, and medicinal plants, are integral to subsistence and cultural practices.

Environmental Threats

Key threats to the TNS landscape include:

- **Illegal Wildlife Trade and Trafficking**: Targeting species like elephants and parrots, driven by high international demand.

- **Bushmeat Hunting**: Unsustainable practices fueled by local and external demand.

- **Deforestation and Habitat Fragmentation**: Caused by logging, agriculture, and infrastructure development.

- **Artisanal Mining**: Leading to deforestation and water pollution.

- **Climate Change**: Exacerbating ecosystem stresses, such as habitat loss and resource scarcity.

Institutional and Governance Context

The TNS is governed through a cooperation agreement between Cameroon, CAR, and RoC, with governance bodies such as:

- **Tri-National Supervision and Adjudication Committee (CTSA)**: High-level decision-making body.

- **Tri-National Scientific Committee (CST)** and **Monitoring Committee (CTS)**: Providing technical and scientific oversight.

- **Local Advisory Boards (LABs)**: Engaging communities in decision-making.

Despite these structures, challenges include limited IPLC representation, weak institutional capacity, and insufficient funding.

Cultural and Spiritual Significance

For Indigenous Peoples, the forest is a sacred space, central to their identity and spirituality. Rituals and ceremonies performed in the forest invoke protection and guidance from spirits and ancestors. The Indigenous peoples's extensive ecological knowledge reflects their deep connection to the land, making them invaluable stewards of biodiversity.

2.3. Demographic and economic information

Overview

The Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape spans three countries—Cameroon, Central African Republic (CAR), and the Republic of Congo (RoC). It is home to approximately 55,000 inhabitants, distributed across b, logging towns, and artisanal mining sites, with significant variations in demographic and economic characteristics across the three countries. The population includes Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), who depend heavily on forest resources for their livelihoods. Gender inequalities, marginalization, and specific risks of Sexual Exploitation,

Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) are prevalent throughout the TNS, exacerbated by poverty, governance gaps, and weak enforcement of safeguards.

Demographic and Economic Context by Country
1. **Cameroon (Lobéké National Park and Surroundings)**
    o **Demographics**:
        ▪ Population: Approximately 18,000, with 90% Bantu farmers and 10% Indigenous Peoples.
        ▪ Gender: Women constitute around 50% of the population but face systemic barriers to education, property ownership, and participation in decision-making processes. Indigenous women often endure compounded marginalization due to their ethnicity and gender.
        ▪ Vulnerable Groups: Women, youth, and Indigenous Peoples are the most disadvantaged, with Indigenous women experiencing high levels of economic and social exclusion.
    o **Economy**:
        ▪ Primary Livelihoods: Subsistence farming (cassava, maize, plantain), artisanal fishing, and wage labor in logging. Indigenous Peoples also rely on hunting, gathering, and non-timber forest products (NTFPs), including medicinal plants.
        ▪ Challenges: Indigenous communities often face restricted access to land and resources, pushing many into exploitative wage labor in farming and logging.
        ▪ Gendered Economy: Women play a vital role in informal sectors, particularly NTFP collection, yet lack control over key cash crops like cocoa, which is dominated by Bantu farmers.
    o **SEAH Risks**:
        ▪ Economic dependence on logging camps and rural traders exposes women and girls to significant risks of sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse.
2. **Central African Republic (Dzanga-Sangha Protected Area Complex and Surroundings)**
    o **Demographics**:
        ▪ Population: Approximately 20,000, comprising Indigenous Peoples, non-Indigenous farmers, and migrant workers.
        ▪ Gender: Women represent about 51% of the population and contribute heavily to subsistence livelihoods but have limited access to formal economic activities.
        ▪ Vulnerable Groups: Indigenous women and girls face exclusion from education and formal employment, remaining trapped in cycles of poverty and dependence.
    o **Economy**:
        ▪ Primary Livelihoods: Artisanal gold and diamond mining, subsistence farming, and fishing. Hunting and gathering remain critical for Indigenous communities.
        ▪ Challenges: Artisanal mining is informal and environmentally damaging, while formal employment opportunities are limited.
        ▪ Gender Dynamics: Women engage in small-scale trading and alcohol production, with earnings primarily reinvested in household needs.
    o **SEAH Risks**:
        ▪ Women working near mining sites face significant risks of exploitation and harassment, worsened by weak law enforcement and institutional safeguards.

- o **Promising Practices**:
  - Local initiatives focus on supporting traditional knowledge, with efforts to revitalize practices such as Indigenous ecological techniques and intergenerational knowledge sharing.
3. **Republic of Congo (Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park and Surroundings)**
   - o **Demographics**:
     - Population: Approximately 17,000, predominantly Indigenous Peoples (Badzama) and local farmers, with migrant workers in logging and mining.
     - Gender: Women make up about 48% of the population, contributing significantly to household income through informal trade and forest-based livelihoods.
     - Vulnerable Groups: Indigenous women and youth face pronounced barriers in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, further entrenching systemic inequalities.
   - o **Economy**:
     - Primary Livelihoods: Employment in logging, subsistence agriculture, and artisanal mining. Forest resources are essential for Indigenous Peoples' survival, including hunting, fishing, and gathering.
     - Challenges: Indigenous women face exclusion from higher-paying jobs, leading to income disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents.
   - o **SEAH Risks**:
     - Logging camps and remote areas are hotspots for sexual exploitation and abuse. Indigenous women, in particular, are at heightened risk due to limited protections and cultural barriers to reporting abuse.
   - o **Advances**:
     - The Republic of Congo leads the region with progressive laws on Indigenous Peoples' rights, including efforts to establish community-managed conservation areas (APACs).

Regional Insights Across all three countries, Indigenous Peoples and local communities face shared challenges, including limited involvement in governance, land tenure insecurity, and gender inequality. Advancements in conservation legislation, such as forestry and protected area laws, provide a framework for inclusive governance, though implementation remains uneven. Strengthening participatory governance, addressing systemic gender disparities, and supporting sustainable economic opportunities, particularly for Indigenous women, are critical to fostering resilience and equitable development in the region

Gender-Specific Challenges Across TNS
1. **Workforce Participation**:
   - o Women predominantly engage in subsistence agriculture and the collection of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), such as medicinal plants and wild foods, which are critical to their families' livelihoods. However, they face systemic barriers to accessing higher-paying jobs in sectors like logging and mining, which are dominated by men. Additionally, women have limited access to credit, land ownership, and resources due to structural discrimination.
   - o Indigenous women are particularly affected, as restrictions on access to traditional lands further marginalize their economic activities.
2. **Education and Empowerment**:
   - o Significant gender gaps in education persist, with Indigenous girls being the most disadvantaged. Cultural norms, poverty, early marriage, and household responsibilities often prevent them from attending school. This lack of education perpetuates cycles of poverty and limits their opportunities for leadership and formal employment.

3. **Decision-Making**:
    - o Women remain underrepresented in governance and decision-making platforms at local and regional levels. This exclusion prevents them from influencing conservation policies and development initiatives, which often disregard their specific needs and priorities.
    - o Leadership programs and capacity-building efforts for women, especially Indigenous women, are necessary to empower them as active participants in governance.
4. **Access to Resources**:
    - o Indigenous women face disproportionate restrictions on accessing traditional lands, forest resources, and NTFPs. Protected area policies often limit their ability to gather essential products for sustenance and income generation. This restriction exacerbates gender inequalities and undermines their livelihoods.
5. **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**:
    - o Gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation, early marriages, physical and emotional abuse, and denial of resources, is a prevalent issue in the TNS region. Indigenous women and girls are particularly vulnerable due to their marginalized status and lack of institutional protections.
    - o SEAH risks are heightened in contexts such as logging camps, rural areas, and interactions with traders and employers.

Recommendations to Address SEAH Risks:
1. **Strengthening Safeguards**:
    - o Implement and enforce robust environmental and social safeguards with specific mechanisms to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH). This includes training park managers and community leaders on gender equity and human rights.
2. **Building Awareness**:
    - o Conduct gender-sensitization and SEAH awareness campaigns targeting all stakeholders, including government officials, employers, and community members, to reduce stigma and foster accountability.
3. **Supporting Women's Leadership**:
    - o Actively include women, particularly Indigenous women, in decision-making processes at all stages of project planning, implementation, and monitoring. Capacity-building initiatives should aim to enhance women's leadership skills and encourage their participation in governance.
4. **Developing Grievance Mechanisms**:
    - o Establish accessible, culturally sensitive grievance redress systems that allow women to report SEAH incidents safely and confidentially. Women's active involvement in designing and managing these systems is crucial to ensure their effectiveness.
5. **Promoting Sustainable Livelihoods**:
    - o Support the development of women-led value chains for NTFPs, such as apiculture, mushroom farming, and small-scale agroforestry initiatives. These activities can provide women with sustainable income while contributing to conservation objectives.

Community Initiatives:
- Women's groups around protected areas have started initiatives to develop value chains for NTFPs, such as honey and wild foods, and promote ecological and sustainable agriculture. These efforts not only generate income but also strengthen women's roles in conservation.
- Community alert groups to address GBV have been established, though these require further support and scaling to enhance their reach and impactGroupe Genre.

Addressing these gender-specific challenges requires integrated, participatory approaches that place women, especially Indigenous women, at the center of decision-making and project design. By

supporting their leadership, improving access to resources, and strengthening safeguards against exploitation, projects in the TNS can create more equitable and inclusive outcomes.

This demographic and economic analysis underscores the critical need for gender-sensitive, inclusive, and participatory approaches in project design and implementation to ensure equitable benefits for all stakeholders, particularly the most vulnerable.

2.4. IPs and Vulnerable Groups

(a) Overview of Indigenous Peoples Situation

Indigenous Peoples (IPs) in Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), and the Republic of Congo (RoC) face systemic marginalization and challenges to their rights, livelihoods, and cultural practices. Representing approximately 10% of the population in the Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape, Indigenous groups are pygmy forest-dwellers group, but are called by different names according to their locality. These communities are primarily hunter-gatherers with deep cultural and spiritual ties to forest ecosystems, which are central to their identity and subsistence.

Legally, the recognition of IPs varies across the three countries. Cameroon and CAR have no specific laws recognizing Indigenous Peoples as distinct groups (though CAR has ratified ILO169), though Cameroon acknowledges "marginalized populations" in certain policies. The RoC is the only country in the region to have passed a dedicated law on Indigenous Peoples' rights (Law No. 5-2011), which guarantees tenure rights and access to natural resources, but implementation remains weak. Tenure rights are a major issue across the region, with Indigenous Peoples often displaced from their ancestral lands for conservation, logging, and industrial activities, leaving them reliant on wage labor and subject to economic precarity.

IPs are among the most vulnerable groups in society, facing exclusion from education, healthcare, and political representation. Governments lack dedicated ministries for Indigenous affairs, though the RoC has a department within the Ministry of Justice focused on Indigenous issues. Challenges include restricted access to forests, discrimination, weak legal protections, and human rights abuses, particularly linked to conservation enforcement. Strengthening their land tenure, inclusion in governance, and access to basic services is critical to ensuring their rights and well-being.

(see IPPF in Section 4.6 for more information)

(b) IPs in project sites

In the Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape, Indigenous Peoples (IPs) comprise approximately 10% of the 55,000 residents. These groups are traditionally hunter-gatherers who rely on the forest for food, medicine, cultural practices, and spiritual activities. Despite their deep connection to the forest, many IPs have been displaced from their ancestral lands due to the establishment of protected areas, logging concessions, and agricultural expansion. This displacement has forced semi-sedentarization, with IPs often working as laborers for Bantu communities or logging companies. Their exclusion from decision-making processes and limited access to land exacerbate their marginalization. IPs in the TNS face challenges such as restricted access to natural resources, human rights violations during conservation enforcement, and systemic discrimination in accessing education, healthcare, and representation. These issues are compounded by the lack of meaningful participation in the governance of the TNS, despite their rich ecological knowledge and cultural significance to the landscape.

The PNL recognizes and respects the rights of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) to land, natural resources, and culture, and is committed to obtaining their Free, Prior, and Informed Consent for any intervention. This respect for the rights of the Indigenous peoples has been formalized since 2019 through the MINFOF-ASBABUK MoU. This agreement acknowledges the IP's right to access resource areas within the PNL to carry out their activities and rituals using traditional and ancestral techniques. An independent grievance mechanism has been established and is managed by a local CSO (CEFAID), which is a member of the Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC). Through this center, IPLCs document and report any cases of abuse they may face and also act as educators on human rights issues. The PNL, via the Cameroon Human Rights Commission (CHRC) and the local CSO CEFAID, ensures monitoring of human rights compliance and provides support to victims. Additionally, every year, the PNL supports human rights training for eco-guards, WWF staff, COVAREF members, forest committees (FC), and various IPLCs. (see IPPF in Section 4.6 for more information)

2.5. Gender

Addressing gender disparities and SEAH risks is central to achieving equitable and sustainable outcomes in the TNS landscape. By implementing the Gender Action Plan, the project aims to empower women as critical actors in biodiversity conservation while ensuring their protection from exploitation and harm. Gender-sensitive policies and practices will not only improve outcomes for women but also enhance the overall effectiveness and inclusivity of conservation efforts in the TNS.

In Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), and the Republic of Congo (RoC), significant gender disparities persist across social, economic, and political spheres, deeply impacting women's rights and opportunities. While legal frameworks exist in all three countries to promote gender equality, implementation is inconsistent, especially in rural and Indigenous contexts. Patriarchal norms and cultural practices continue to marginalize women, limiting their access to resources, education, healthcare, and decision-making platforms. Women in the project area—particularly Indigenous and rural women—face compounded challenges due to intersectional inequalities.

Legal and Institutional Context

All three countries have ratified international conventions on gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). National policies exist to address gender-based violence and discrimination, but enforcement is often weak. Cameroon and the RoC have ministries dedicated to gender or women's affairs, but resources and capacity to address systemic inequalities remain limited. In CAR, ongoing political instability has further weakened institutional responses to gender issues.

Economic and Social Context

Women are heavily involved in subsistence agriculture, small-scale trading, and informal economic activities, but they lack control over land and financial resources. Cultural norms often restrict women's property rights, limiting their ability to secure livelihoods independently. Indigenous women of the TNS are particularly marginalized, often excluded from land ownership and wage-earning opportunities. Women's participation in governance and decision-making processes at all levels is minimal, with limited representation in community, national, and conservation-related governance structures.

Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Risks

SEAH risks are prevalent in all three countries, exacerbated by poverty, weak legal enforcement, and power imbalances in rural and conservation settings. Women and girls in Indigenous and rural communities are especially vulnerable due to their economic dependency and lack of access to justice systems. Key risk areas include:

- **Employment and Resource Access**: Women working in logging concessions, artisanal mining, or as laborers in protected areas are often subject to exploitation and harassment by employers or officials.
- **Conservation Enforcement**: Reports of human rights abuses by eco-guards disproportionately affect women, who may face coercion or abuse during interactions with conservation authorities.
- **Rural and Indigenous Settings**: Cultural stigma and patriarchal norms deter women from reporting SEAH incidents, allowing impunity for perpetrators.

Gender Considerations in the Project

The Gender Action Plan developed for this project emphasizes the need for gender-sensitive approaches to ensure women's inclusion and protection across all activities. Key measures include:

1. **Capacity Building**: Training for park authorities, project staff, and community leaders on gender equality and SEAH prevention.
2. **Inclusive Governance**: Strengthening women's representation in decision-making platforms, particularly Indigenous women, to ensure their voices inform conservation and livelihood strategies.
3. **Economic Empowerment**: Supporting women's access to alternative livelihoods, financial resources, and land tenure rights.
4. **SEAH Safeguards**: Establishing accessible grievance mechanisms, informed by Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) principles, and culturally sensitive reporting channels to address SEAH risks.

3. ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL POLICY, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

This chapter first outlines the laws and regulations of Cameroon, where the FTNS is located, but also of CAR and RoC as the activities will impact all 3 countries, and the WWF's ESSF and SIPP that are applicable to the project, and then discusses gaps between CAR, Cameroon, RoC laws and regulations and the SIPP. **For the purposes of the FTNS Project implementation, the principles and procedures of the ESSF and SIPP shall prevail in all cases of discrepancies.**

3.1. Landscape Policies, Laws, Regulations Guidelines (Cameroon, Congo, CAR)

This section provides an overview of the relevant laws, regulations, and policies across Cameroon, the Republic of Congo (RoC), and the Central African Republic (CAR) that pertain to the implementation of environmental and social safeguards and project activities. These include legal and policy frameworks related to environmental protection, labor, land rights, Indigenous Peoples, gender, and community engagement.

(a) Laws on Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation

All three countries have established legal frameworks to address environmental protection and biodiversity conservation:

- **Cameroon**: The framework law on environmental management (Law No. 96/12 of August 1996) provides general principles for environmental conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Specific regulations, such as the 1994 Forestry, Wildlife, and Fisheries Law, establish provisions for the management of protected areas and conservation of biodiversity.

- **Republic of Congo**: The 2003 Environmental Law (Law No. 003/2003) and the 2008 Wildlife and Protected Areas Law (Law No. 37/2008) set the foundation for biodiversity conservation and sustainable management of forests and wildlife.
- **Central African Republic**: The Environmental Code (Law No. 07.018 of 2007) and the 2020 Wildlife and Protected Areas Law emphasize biodiversity protection and management of natural resources. These laws mandate environmental impact assessments, regulation of protected areas, and the sustainable management of biodiversity resources.

(b) Specific Policies Related to Protected Areas and Wildlife

Each country has policies tailored to protected areas and wildlife management:

- **Cameroon**: Policies prioritize the establishment and management of national parks, including community participation through the Ministry of Forestry and Wildlife (MINFOF).
- **RoC**: Protected area management is guided by the Wildlife and Protected Area Code, emphasizing co-management and community engagement through institutions like the Agence Congolaise de la Faune et des Aires Protégées (ACFAP).
- **CAR**: The National Agency for Protected Areas (ANGAP) oversees protected areas, focusing on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in collaboration with local stakeholders.

(c) Laws on Labor and Working Conditions

Labor laws in all three countries aim to regulate employment standards and address issues such as child labor and workplace conditions:

- **Cameroon**: The 1992 Labor Code governs employment relationships, including provisions for health and safety, non-discrimination, and minimum working conditions. However, enforcement is weak, particularly in rural and informal sectors.
- **RoC**: The Labor Code (2002) includes specific provisions for occupational health and safety and prohibits forced and child labor. However, gaps exist in monitoring compliance, especially in extractive industries.
- **CAR**: Labor laws provide guidelines on employment contracts, wages, and working conditions. Child labor remains prevalent, particularly in subsistence farming, artisanal mining, and informal sectors. Across the TNS landscape, child labor is a significant concern, particularly in logging concessions, agriculture, and informal mining, where enforcement mechanisms are limited.

(d) Land Acquisition

Land tenure and acquisition laws vary significantly across the three countries:

- **Cameroon**: Land tenure is governed by the 1974 Land Ordinances, which recognize state ownership of land but allow for limited customary rights. Access to land for Indigenous Peoples and local communities remains precarious.
- **RoC**: The 2004 Land Law recognizes customary land rights but requires formal titling for recognition, a process that is often inaccessible to rural and Indigenous communities.
- **CAR**: The Forest Code and other land-related laws lack clear protections for traditional land uses by Indigenous Peoples and local communities, leading to frequent conflicts over land acquisition for conservation or industrial activities.

(e) Indigenous Peoples

- **Cameroon**: Indigenous Peoples are not formally recognized in national law, though policies refer to "marginalized populations" in development contexts. Their land rights are not explicitly protected, and they are often excluded from decision-making processes.

- **RoC**: The 2011 Law on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is a progressive framework recognizing Indigenous Peoples' rights to land, culture, and resources. Implementation remains a challenge.

- **CAR**: Indigenous Peoples' rights are not formally recognized, and their access to traditional lands is often restricted by conservation or industrial activities.

(f) Gender, Gender-Based Violence, and Sexual Harassment

All three countries have policies addressing gender equality and gender-based violence (GBV), though enforcement remains limited:

- **Cameroon**: National gender policies promote women's rights but do not adequately address GBV and sexual harassment in rural areas. Cultural norms often perpetuate gender disparities.

- **RoC**: The National Gender Policy emphasizes gender mainstreaming in development, though challenges persist in addressing GBV in remote regions.

- **CAR**: GBV is widespread, exacerbated by ongoing conflict. Limited access to legal recourse and services hampers survivors' ability to seek justice. Across the TNS, SEAH risks are significant in conservation and resource-based sectors, necessitating robust safeguards and grievance mechanisms.

(g) Community Engagement

Legal frameworks across the three countries recognize the importance of community participation in resource management:

- **Cameroon**: Community forestry initiatives provide some opportunities for engagement, though Indigenous and local communities face barriers to meaningful participation.

- **RoC**: Policies emphasize co-management of protected areas, though local communities often lack the capacity to fully engage.

- **CAR**: Legal provisions for community consultation exist but are inconsistently applied, particularly in remote areas. Strengthening community engagement mechanisms is critical for ensuring the success of conservation efforts and safeguarding community rights.

3.2. WWF Safeguards Standards and Procedures Applicable to the Project

WWF's safeguards standards require that any potentially adverse environmental and social impacts are identified, and avoided or mitigated. Safeguards policies that are relevant to this project are as follows.

(i) Standard on Environment and Social Risk Management

This standard is applicable because the Fondation Tri-National de la Sangha (FTNS) project intends to support activities that result in a variety of environmental and social impacts. The Project is

expected to restructure the FTNS and reinforce its ability to deal with environmental and social impacts.

The precise location and impact of specific activities cannot be determined at this stage, and will only be known during project implementation. Thus, an ESMF is prepared to set out guidelines and procedures on how to identify, assess and monitor environmental and social impacts, and how to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts. Site-specific ESMPs will be prepared as required, based on principles and guidelines of the ESMF.

(ii)   Standard on Protection of Natural Habitats

WWF's mission is to protect natural habitats, and it does not undertake any projects that would result in conversion or degradation of critical natural habitats, especially those that are legally protected, officially proposed for protection, or identified as having high conservation value.

Overall, the Fondation Tri-National de la Sangha (FTNS) project activities will produce benefits in terms of landscapes governance and creation of funding opportunities for field activities. Any potential adverse environmental impacts on human populations or environmentally important areas will be managed through the application of the WWF standard on protection of Natural Habitats. Criteria have been defined to allow appropriate selection of field activities

(iii)   Standard on Restriction of Access and Resettlement

The WWF's Standard on Restriction of Access and Resettlement aims to ensure that any adverse social or economic impacts on resource-dependent local communities, resulting from restrictions on access to or use of natural resources, are minimized and managed appropriately. To avoid such impacts, the project will implement a participatory process guided by the **Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)** and the **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) protocol**, ensuring that affected communities are fully engaged in decision-making and that alternative livelihoods are developed where access restrictions are necessary.

Potential adverse impacts may include reduced access to forest resources, such as bushmeat, non-timber forest products, or traditional hunting and gathering areas, which are critical for local livelihoods. However, the project has triggered this Standard to ensure that mitigation measures, including compensation plans, sustainable livelihood programs, and grievance mechanisms, are established and rigorously monitored to safeguard the rights and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

(iv)   Standard on Indigenous Peoples

The WWF's standard requires ensuring that indigenous rights are respected, that IPs do not suffer adverse impacts from projects, and that IPs receive culturally appropriate benefits from conservation. The policy mandates that projects respect IPs' rights, including their rights to FPIC processes and to tenure over traditional territories; that culturally appropriate and equitable benefits (including from traditional ecological knowledge) are negotiated and agreed upon with the IPs' communities in question; and that potential adverse impacts are avoided or adequately addressed through a participatory and consultative approach.

This project has triggered the WWF's Standard on Indigenous Peoples to ensure that the rights of Indigenous Peoples are respected throughout its implementation. The project operates in areas with significant Indigenous populations who rely on natural resources within the protected areas for their livelihoods and cultural practices. To safeguard their rights, the project will adhere to FPIC processes, respect tenure over traditional territories, and ensure that culturally appropriate and equitable benefits are negotiated with Indigenous communities. Additionally, potential adverse impacts will be avoided or mitigated through participatory and consultative approaches in alignment with the project's Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).

(v)   Standard on Community Health, Safety and Security

This Standard ensures that the health, safety and security of communities are respected and appropriately protected. The Guidance on Labor and Working Conditions requires employers and supervisors to implement all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of workers through the introduction of preventive and protective measures. It also requires that the labor rights of project-employed workers are observed, as indicated in Annex 1: Screening Tool. Project activities should also prevent adverse impact involving quality and supply of water to affected communities; SEAH- related risks to both affected communities as well as project staff; safety of project infrastructure, life and properties; protective mechanisms for the use of hazardous materials; disease prevention procedures; and emergency preparedness and response.

This project has triggered the WWF's Standard on Community Health, Safety, and Security to ensure that the health and well-being of affected communities, as well as project staff, are safeguarded. Given the scope of project activities, there are potential risks related to water quality, SEAH (Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment), and the use of hazardous materials, particularly in conservation areas and their buffer zones. To address these risks, the project will implement preventive and protective measures, including robust health and safety protocols, SEAH mitigation strategies, disease prevention measures, and emergency preparedness plans, as outlined in the Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).

(vi)   Standard on Pest Management

WWF-funded projects are not allowed to procure or use formulated products that are in World Health Organization (WHO) Classes IA and IB, or formulations of products in Class II, unless there are restrictions that are likely to deny use or access by lay personnel and others without training or proper equipment. The project will follow the recommendations and minimum standards as described in the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) International Code of Conduct on the Distribution and Use of Pesticides and its associated technical guidelines, and procure only pesticides, along with suitable protective and application equipment, that will permit pest management actions to be carried out with well-defined and minimal risk to health, environment, and livelihoods.

The project does not trigger this standard.

(vii)   Standard on Cultural Resources

This Standard ensures that Cultural Resources are appropriately preserved and their destruction, damage or loss is appropriately avoided. Physical cultural resources (PCR) include archaeological, paleontological, historical, architectural, and sacred sites including graveyards, burial sites, of unique natural values. Intangible cultural resources include traditional ecological knowledge, performing arts, oral traditions and expressions, traditional craftsmanship and social practices, rituals and events. The impacts on cultural resources resulting from project activities, including mitigating measures, may not contravene either the recipient country's national legislation or its obligations under relevant international environmental treaties and agreements.

This project has triggered the WWF's Standard on Cultural Resources to ensure the preservation and protection of both physical and intangible cultural resources in the project areas. As the project operates in landscapes that include sacred sites, burial grounds, and areas of traditional ecological knowledge significant to Indigenous Peoples and local communities, it will implement measures to avoid any destruction or damage to these resources. The project will comply with national legislation and international agreements, ensuring that any potential impacts are identified and mitigated through consultations and participatory processes involving the affected communities.

(viii) Standard on Grievance Mechanisms

Project-affected communities and other interested stakeholders may raise a grievance at any time to FTNS Executive management and WWF. FTNS Executive management will be responsible for

informing project-affected parties about the Accountability and Grievance Mechanism. Contact information of FTNS Executive management and WWF will be made publicly available. Relevant details are also provided in the Grievance Redress section of this ESMF/PF/IPPF.

The WWF Standard on Grievance Mechanisms is not intended to replace project- and country-level dispute resolution and redress mechanisms. This mechanism is designed to: address potential breaches of WWF's policies and procedures in a gender-responsive manner; be independent, transparent, and effective; be survivor-centered and offer protections to those reporting SEAH-related grievances; be accessible to project-affected people; keep complainants abreast of progress of cases brought forward; and maintain records on all cases and issues brought forward for review.

(ix) Standard on Public Consultation and Disclosure

This standard requires meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders, occurring as early as possible and throughout the project cycle. It requires the Project Team to provide relevant information in a timely manner and in a form and language that are understandable and accessible to diverse stakeholders. This standard also requires that information concerning environmental and social issues relevant to the project is disclosed for at least 30 days prior to implementation, and 45 days if the Indigenous Peoples Standard has been triggered. WWF will disclose safeguards documentation on its Safeguards Resources web page. The final safeguards documents should be published on national websites of the Implementing Agencies and made available locally in specific locations. The project is also required to locally release all final key safeguards documents via hardcopy, translated into the local language and in a culturally appropriate manner, to facilitate awareness by relevant stakeholders that the information is in the public domain for review.

(x) Standard on Stakeholder Engagement

This standard ensures that WWF is committed to meaningful, effective and informed stakeholder engagement in the design and implementation of all GEF and GCF projects. WWF's commitment to stakeholder engagement arises from internal standards such as WWF's Project and Program Standards (PPMS), as well as WWF's commitment to international instruments such as United Nations Declaration on Indigenous People (UNDRIP). Stakeholder engagement is an overarching term that encompasses a range of activities and interactions with stakeholders throughout the project cycle and is an essential aspect of good project management. The project has prepared a Stakeholder Engagement Plan that will be implemented during the project.

(xi) Guidance Note on Gender-based Violence and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment

All over the world, it is estimated that one in three women and girls experience GBV during her lifetime. A recent study conducted by IUCN, in collaboration with USAID as part of Advancing Gender in the Environment (AGENT), states that forms of GBV (ranging from sexual, physical and psychological violence, to trafficking, sexual harassment, sexual coercion and in some cases rape) can be linked to environmental issues.

Many projects implemented by WWF relate to effective management of protected areas and the landscapes in which they are located through support to law enforcement, patrolling and better management and restoration of landscapes by restricting access to natural resources. These activities can potentially give rise to GBV/SEAH risks where government-employed law enforcement officials/rangers/guards supported by the project may misuse the power of their positions by sexually exploiting women in local communities. This is a particular risk if women are collecting water or natural resources in a protected area. As another example, projects that promote alternative livelihoods, particularly ones that improve women's empowerment and decision making, can often lead to changes in power dynamics within communities and increase the risks of GBV/SEAH toward those empowered women.

GBV and SEAH in the implementation of WWF activities in projects and programs is unacceptable and requires timely, proportional, and appropriate action. WWF recognizes that to achieve biodiversity conservation it is vital to promote gender equality and make every effort to ensure that project activities implemented by WWF respect integrity and human rights and mitigate any risk that gives rise to discriminatory and exploitative gender inequalities. WWF does support projects in areas where there is civil war, ethnic conflict, and insurgencies where there are existing GBV/SEAH risks. WWF therefore needs to understand these risks in order to avoid exacerbating local conditions that contribute to GBV/SEAH, which would undermine any conservation outcomes the project may seek to achieve.

For WWF projects, including GEF and GCF projects, under the Standard on Community Health and Security, the project team should identify any potential GBV/SEAH risks by screening proposed project activities using the following questions:

- Is there a risk that the project could pose a greater burden on women by restricting the use, development, and protection of natural resources by women compared with that of men?
- Is there a risk that persons employed by or engaged directly in the project might engage in gender-based violence (including sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment)?
- Does the project increase the risk of GBV and/or SEAH for women and girls, for example by changing resource use practices?
- Does any mandated training for any individuals associated with the project (including project staff, government park rangers and guards, other park staff, consultants, partner organizations and contractors) cover GBV/SEAH (along with human rights, etc.)?

The identification of GBV/SEAH risks in a project is normally undertaken as part of project preparation and could be conducted during community/stakeholder consultations together with identifying potential risks and screening impacts on vulnerable groups, community health, safety and security, labor and working conditions, gender equality issues, and any other social or environmental risks. Any potential GB V/SE AH risk identified during this stage would be factored into the project's overall social risk, which, in turn, is factored into the overall environmental and social risk associated with a project.

(xii)   Guidance Note on Labor and Working Conditions

As a conservation organization, WWF does not typically fund large infrastructure activities in conservation projects implemented by WWF's GEF and GCF Agency and therefore does not directly adversely impact labor and working conditions. However, WWF GEF Agency projects do implement projects in the forestry, agriculture and fisheries sectors, which may have potential unintended adverse impacts. This is mostly seen in financing activities necessary for strengthening protected area management systems, including construction of protected area administrative buildings, watch towers, or accommodations for park guards.

In such cases, these activities are usually executed by third party contractors who employ construction workers including sub-contractors. In such cases, WWF will ensure that any funding for such activities complies with WWF's Environment and Social Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP) and more specifically international labor and working condition standards such as the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Declaration on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and any relevant local labor standards of the project specific countries.

This Guidance Note provides detailed guidance of reasonable precautions to implement in managing principal risks to occupational health and safety. The following is based on the IFC's Environmental, Health, and Safety Guidelines (April 30, 2007), and covers the following general thematic areas:

1. General Facility Design and Operation
    a. Integrity of Workplace Structures
    b. Severe Weather and Facility Shutdown
    c. Workspace and Exit
    d. Fire Precautions
    e. Lavatories and Showers
    f. Potable Water Supply
    g. Clean Eating Area
    h. Lighting
    i. Safe Access
    j. First Aid
    k. Air Supply
    l. Work Environment Temperature
2. Training
    a. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Training
3. Physical Hazards
    a. Rotating and Moving Equipment

    b. Vibration
    c. Electrical
    d. Eye Hazards
    e. Welding / Hot Work
    f. Industrial Vehicle Driving and Site Traffic
    g. Working Environment Temperature
    h. Ergonomics, Repetitive Motion, Manual Handling
    i. Working at Heights
    j. Illumination
4. Standards for Workers Living Conditions
    a. General living facilities
    b. Drainage
    c. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation and light
    d. Water
    e. Wastewater and solid waste
    f. Rooms/dormitories facilities
    g. Bed arrangements and storage facilities
    h. Sanitary and toilet facilities
    i. Toilet facilities
    j. Showers/bathrooms and other sanitary facilities
    k. Canteen, cooking and laundry facilities
    l. Medical facilities
    m. Leisure, social and telecommunications facilities

[1]

(xiii)   Guidance Note on Ranger Principles

Rangers play a key role in protecting wildlife, managing protected areas, and resolving human-wildlife conflict. Rangers must act within the law and under high ethical standards in order to

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1 Specific guidance and standards can be found in the Guidance Note on Labor and Working Conditions.

achieve positive outcomes from both people and nature. WWF only supports legitimate law enforcement activities that are carried out in a way that respects and protects the human rights of local communities and Indigenous Peoples. Certain measures are in place to uphold WWF's high ethical standards, including a risk assessment, mitigation actions, and continuous monitoring throughout implementation.[2] Rangers are expected to adhere to the following principles:

1. Act within the law.
2. Ensure accountability.
3. Build ranger capacity
4. Support the welfare of rangers and their families.
5. Partner with local communities.
6. Identify, monitor and plan for challenges.
7. Maintain impartiality.
8. Communicate regularly.
9. Sanctions for malfeasance.

3.3. Gaps between Cameroon, RoC, CAR laws and policies and the WWF's SIPP

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation

- **National Laws**: Many countries, including Cameroon, CAR, and RoC, have legal frameworks for biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. However, these laws often prioritize economic activities, such as logging and mining, over conservation, leading to inconsistencies in enforcement. Additionally, biodiversity offset mechanisms are either underdeveloped or poorly implemented.

- **WWF's ESSF**: WWF's ESSF requires stronger safeguards, including no-net-loss or net-positive-impact approaches for biodiversity and systematic Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) for all project activities.

- **Gap**: National frameworks may lack stringent enforcement mechanisms, comprehensive biodiversity monitoring systems, and integration of conservation planning with sustainable development goals.

Indigenous Peoples and FPIC

- **National Laws**: While Cameroon, CAR, and RoC recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples in their constitutions, implementation is inconsistent. FPIC processes are often absent or not legally binding. Land tenure rights for Indigenous Peoples are frequently overlooked, and national laws often prioritize state ownership of natural resources over customary rights.

- **WWF's SIPP**: WWF mandates robust FPIC processes, explicit recognition of Indigenous Peoples' tenure rights, and active participation in decision-making processes. It also emphasizes culturally appropriate benefit-sharing mechanisms.

- **Gap**: National frameworks often do not provide legal mandates for FPIC or mechanisms for enforcing Indigenous Peoples' participation in conservation activities.

Labor and Working Conditions

- **National Laws**: Labor laws in the project countries generally provide for workers' rights, including minimum wage, working hours, and health and safety standards. However, enforcement is weak, particularly in remote areas. Child labor and unsafe working conditions are prevalent in informal sectors such as artisanal mining and logging.

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[2] See Ranger Principles document for more details.

- **WWF's ESSF**: WWF requires compliance with International Labour Organization (ILO) standards, robust mechanisms to prevent child and forced labor, and adherence to workplace safety standards.
- **Gap**: Enforcement of labor rights in national contexts is often weak, particularly regarding child labor, occupational health and safety, and grievance redress mechanisms for workers.

Gender Equality and SEAH Prevention

- **National Laws**: The project countries have gender equality provisions in their legal frameworks, but these are often undermined by cultural norms and practices that limit women's participation and decision-making. There are few specific legal frameworks addressing SEAH (Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment).
- **WWF's ESSF**: WWF emphasizes gender-responsive approaches at a minimum (WWF Statement of Principles on Gender Equality), explicit measures to prevent SEAH, and the inclusion of women in project design, planning and implementation.
- **Gap**: National laws lack targeted SEAH prevention measures, and implementation of gender-sensitive policies is weak in rural and Indigenous communities.

Land Acquisition and Tenure Rights

- **National Laws**: Land acquisition laws in Cameroon, CAR, and RoC generally prioritize state control over land, often disregarding customary tenure rights of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Compensation mechanisms for land acquisition are inconsistent and rarely address non-economic losses such as cultural and spiritual connections to land.
- **WWF's ESSF**: WWF requires FPIC for land use changes, recognition of customary land rights, and equitable compensation for affected communities.
- **Gap**: National frameworks often lack formal recognition of customary tenure and fail to include FPIC as a requirement for land acquisition.

Community Engagement

- **National Laws**: While public participation is often mandated in environmental decision-making, it is frequently limited to token consultations without meaningful engagement of local communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples and women.
- **WWF's ESSF**: WWF requires inclusive, participatory processes that actively engage marginalized groups and establish grievance mechanisms for project-affected communities.
- **Gap**: National policies do not consistently ensure meaningful participation, nor do they provide accessible mechanisms for grievances and feedback.

Safeguarding Cultural Resources

- **National Laws**: Laws protecting cultural resources often focus on physical heritage, such as archaeological sites, with limited recognition of intangible cultural heritage or Indigenous Peoples' spiritual connections to landscapes.
- **WWF's ESSF**: WWF's safeguards explicitly include the protection of both tangible and intangible cultural resources, ensuring their preservation through participatory and culturally sensitive approaches.
- **Gap**: National frameworks often neglect intangible cultural heritage and lack mechanisms for consulting communities about cultural resource management.

By addressing these gaps, the project can align national frameworks with WWF's ESSF and SIPP to achieve comprehensive environmental and social safeguards.

For the purposes of the FTNS project, the provisions of the WWF's ESSF and SIPP shall prevail over national legislations in all cases of discrepancy.

4. ANTICIPATED ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

4.1. Adverse Environmental Impacts

The project activities under the TNS initiative aim to enhance conservation efforts, strengthen governance, and improve livelihoods for Indigenous Peoples and local communities while ensuring sustainable biodiversity management. However, some activities may result in adverse environmental impacts if not properly managed. Key risks include habitat disturbance, increased human-wildlife conflicts, resource over-exploitation, and pollution from infrastructure development. To address these risks, the project will implement robust mitigation measures aligned with the WWF Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) and national laws.

For instance, anti-poaching patrols, while critical to conservation, may inadvertently restrict community access to traditional hunting areas, necessitating participatory planning and alternative livelihood programs. Similarly, infrastructure development, such as roads or facilities in buffer zones, could lead to habitat fragmentation and pollution. Measures such as Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), waste management protocols, and sustainable construction practices will be implemented to mitigate these impacts. Capacity-building activities for park authorities and communities may also inadvertently increase human presence in sensitive areas, impacting wildlife. This will be mitigated through strict monitoring and guidance on sustainable practices.

The project's participatory approach will ensure that Indigenous Peoples and local communities are actively involved in the design and implementation of mitigation strategies, fostering ownership and compliance. Additionally, grievance mechanisms and continuous environmental monitoring will be employed to identify and address potential issues promptly.

Table 3. Anticipated Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Project Activity (Ref. Number)	Potential Environmental Impact	Proposed Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party
OP.1.1.1: Strengthening FTNS governance systems	FTNS governance system may not adequately integrate indigenous knowledge on the environment and disregards local solutions or initiatives when funding activities	A safeguard officer within the FTNS will make sure local knowledge is integrated when making decisions on funding	FTNS Board and Executive Management
OP.3.1.2: Supporting IPLC governance platforms	Potential overuse of natural resources due to new governance arrangements	Develop resource management plans and enforce sustainable practices	IPLC Governance Bodies, Local Authorities

OP.3.1.3: Improving community livelihoods through sustainable practices	Overharvesting of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) or over-reliance on single activities	Promote diverse and sustainable livelihood programs	Local NGOs, Protected Area Management
OP.3.2.1: Enhancing transboundary collaboration	Increased cross-border activities leading to habitat disturbance	Develop and enforce cross-border conservation protocols	National Park Authorities, Transboundary Committees
Infrastructure Development Activities	Habitat fragmentation, soil erosion, pollution during construction	Conduct EIAs, adopt sustainable building practices, and restore habitats	Contractors, Park Authorities
Community-based Tourism Initiatives	Over-tourism leading to wildlife disturbance and waste accumulation	Develop visitor management plans and establish waste management systems	Tourism Operators, Local Communities

4.2. Adverse Social Impacts

The TNS project aims to strengthen conservation, governance, and community livelihoods, but several activities could have social impacts if not properly managed. Potential social risks include restricted access to resources, inequitable benefit sharing, community conflicts, and exclusion of vulnerable groups, particularly Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth. These risks arise primarily from activities related to governance strengthening, land-use planning, livelihood improvement programs, and infrastructure development.

For example, the enforcement of conservation policies and anti-poaching measures may inadvertently limit community access to traditional lands and resources, affecting livelihoods. To mitigate this, the project will incorporate Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes and ensure the inclusion of affected communities in decision-making. Livelihood programs, while beneficial, may not adequately address the needs of marginalized groups, leading to potential exclusion. This will be mitigated through targeted programs for vulnerable populations and gender-sensitive approaches.

Conflict may arise during land-use planning or benefit-sharing discussions, especially in areas with overlapping claims or tensions between stakeholders. Transparent dialogue platforms, grievance mechanisms, and capacity-building for conflict resolution will help mitigate these risks. Additionally, the project will implement safeguards against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) through awareness programs, strict codes of conduct for project staff, and accessible reporting mechanisms.

By engaging stakeholders through participatory approaches and ensuring continuous monitoring, the project aims to foster inclusive, equitable, and sustainable outcomes for all communities.

Table 4. Anticipated Social Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Project Activity (Ref. Number)	Potential Social Impact	Proposed Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party
OP.1.1.1: Strengthening FTNS governance systems	Exclusion of Indigenous Peoples and local communities from governance structures	Ensure representation of IPLCs in governance bodies and decision-making processes	FTNS Board, IPLC Representatives
OP.1.1.3: Developing FTNS environmental and social safeguards	Limited understanding of safeguards by local communities	Conduct awareness campaigns and capacity-building on safeguards	FTNS Safeguards Team, Local NGOs
OP.3.1.1: Supporting integration of safeguards at national segment levels	Conflicts over resource access or restrictions	Implement FPIC processes and establish clear grievance redress mechanisms	FTNS Safeguards Team, Protected Area Staff
OP.3.1.2: Supporting IPLC governance platforms	Risk of marginalization of women and youth in governance	Establish quotas and targeted programs for women and youth representation	Local IPLC Governance Bodies, NGOs
OP.3.1.3: Improving community livelihoods through sustainable practices	Unequal access to livelihood opportunities, particularly for women	Design gender-sensitive livelihood programs and provide targeted training	Local NGOs, IPLC Committees
OP.3.2.1: Enhancing transboundary collaboration	Disruption of traditional cross-border resource-sharing practices	Involve IPLCs in transboundary planning and incorporate cultural considerations	Transboundary Committees, National Park Authorities
Infrastructure Development Activities	Displacement of communities or loss of access to resources	Conduct participatory land-use planning and apply FPIC for all infrastructure projects	Contractors, Park Authorities, IPLC Representatives
Community-based Tourism Initiatives	Unequal benefit sharing and risk of exploitation	Develop benefit-sharing agreements and establish transparent revenue mechanisms	Tourism Operators, Local IPLCs
Anti-Poaching Activities	Risk of physical confrontations or human rights violations	Train eco-guards on human rights and community engagement	Protected Area Staff, NGOs

Capacity-Building Activities	Exclusion of marginalized groups from training opportunities	Ensure inclusive and equitable access to capacity-building programs	Training Providers, NGOs
law enforcement and improved park management through the FTNS	new policies and improved governance approaches. These issues could lead to access restrictions to IP&LCs.	Ensure participation of IPLC in FTNS governance to assess the risk and discuss mitigation/compensation measures + Ensure the GRM is available	FTNS Board, FTNS safeguard officer, IPLC Representatives

4.3. Process Framework: Livelihood Restoration Measures

The development of site-specific management plans under the TNS project, including strengthened conservation efforts and anti-poaching activities, may result in restrictions on access to natural resources and livelihoods for local communities, particularly those dependent on forest resources. These restrictions can arise from various project activities, including the creation or enforcement of no-go zones in protected areas, stricter regulation of hunting and fishing, and the establishment of alternative livelihoods programs that alter traditional land use patterns.

Potential Restrictions

1. **Access to Protected Areas**: The enforcement of conservation policies may limit community access to protected areas for activities such as hunting, fishing, and gathering of non-timber forest products (NTFPs). Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs), whose livelihoods are intricately tied to these forests, may face significant disruptions to their daily lives.

2. **Livelihood Practices**: Traditional agricultural practices, such as slash-and-burn farming, may be restricted in buffer zones to prevent habitat degradation. Similarly, community reliance on bushmeat for protein and income may be curtailed due to anti-poaching measures.

3. **Cultural and Spiritual Practices**: The designation of areas as conservation zones or the implementation of improved law enforcement measures for existing conservation zones may interfere with access to culturally or spiritually significant sites, leading to disruptions in traditional rituals and ceremonies.

4. **Market Access and Economic Opportunities**: The regulation of logging or artisanal mining activities, which provide income to many community members, may lead to reduced market access and economic challenges, particularly for those who lack alternative income sources.

Livelihood Restoration Measures

To address these challenges and ensure no adverse impacts on community well-being, the project will implement a range of livelihood restoration measures:

1. **Participatory Development of Management Plans**:
   - Community participation will be central to the design and implementation of site-specific management plans.
   - Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes will be conducted to ensure IPLCs' voices are heard and their concerns integrated into management strategies.
   - Land-use zoning will incorporate traditional land use practices and seek to balance conservation objectives with community needs.

2. **Alternative Livelihood Programs**:
   - The project will introduce and support alternative livelihoods that align with conservation objectives, such as sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, and non-timber forest product enterprises.
   - Training programs will be conducted to build community capacity for these alternative livelihoods, with particular emphasis on inclusivity, gender equity, and youth participation.

3. **Access to Resources**:

   o Negotiated agreements will provide IPLCs with continued access to critical resources within conservation zones, particularly for subsistence needs.

   o Seasonal access or quotas may be established to balance resource use with conservation objectives.

4. **Benefit Sharing**:

   o The project will establish mechanisms for equitable sharing of benefits derived from conservation activities, such as eco-tourism revenue or carbon credits.

   o Community funds may be created to finance local development projects and compensate for restrictions on resource access.

5. **Cultural Resource Protection**:

   o The project will identify and protect culturally significant sites within conservation zones, ensuring community access for spiritual practices.

6. **Grievance Redress Mechanisms**:

   o Accessible grievance redress mechanisms will be established to address community concerns related to restrictions on resource access or livelihoods.

   o Regular monitoring and community feedback loops will be maintained to adapt management plans based on evolving needs and concerns.

Example Scenarios

1. **Forest Resource Use**: In areas where hunting and gathering are restricted, the project will facilitate the establishment of sustainable community hunting zones or wildlife management areas outside the core protected zones. Training in wildlife management and monitoring will enable communities to sustainably manage these resources.

2. **Agricultural Practices**: Where traditional slash-and-burn practices are restricted, the project will support communities in adopting agroforestry or climate-smart agriculture practices. These alternatives will improve productivity while reducing environmental impact.

3. **Artisanal Mining**: For communities reliant on artisanal mining, the project will support formalization of these activities in designated zones and provide training in safer, more sustainable mining techniques.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of livelihood restoration measures, the project will establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, including:

- Regular socio-economic surveys to assess community well-being and livelihoods.

- Impact assessments to evaluate the success of alternative livelihood programs.

- Adaptive management processes to revise plans based on community feedback.

By proactively addressing potential restrictions through participatory approaches and livelihood restoration measures, the project aims to achieve conservation goals while ensuring the rights, well-being, and resilience of IPLCs. This process framework will ensure that communities remain active partners in conservation efforts, creating a foundation for sustainable and equitable management of the TNS landscape.

Any change of land use or new zonation should be based on free and prior informed consultations of the affected communities and relevant authorities, which should be carried out prior to finalizing any usage changes.

Livelihoods-related support during project implementation will be provided to the households (HH) of all communities impacted by project-induced restrictions of access to natural and community resources within the targeted areas. This process will be organized in the following manner:

Screening

- **Objective**: Identify the households, communities, and specific individuals potentially impacted by restrictions on access to resources.

- **Activities**:

    o Conduct initial assessments in collaboration with local stakeholders, park managers, and community representatives to map the geographic and demographic areas likely to experience restrictions.

    o Identify specific groups, including Indigenous Peoples and vulnerable households, that may face disproportionate impacts due to their reliance on restricted resources.

    o Use participatory tools to ensure transparency and inclusivity in identifying affected populations.

Social Assessment

- **Objective**: Understand the socio-economic context and resource dependency of affected communities to design appropriate livelihood restoration measures.

- **Activities**:

    o Gather data on household income sources, resource use patterns, and cultural practices tied to resource access.

    o Assess the potential impacts of resource restrictions on food security, income, and overall well-being.

    o Conduct gender-disaggregated analysis to understand how restrictions may differently impact men, women, and vulnerable groups, including youth and the elderly.

    o Identify existing community coping mechanisms and support systems to integrate into project planning.

Livelihood Restoration Plans (LRPs)

- **Objective**: Develop tailored plans to restore or enhance the livelihoods of affected households while aligning with conservation objectives.

- **Activities**:

    o Engage affected communities through participatory processes to co-develop LRPs.

- Incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and local practices into restoration strategies.
- Design plans with clear timelines, roles, and responsibilities for implementing livelihood restoration measures.
- Include provisions for monitoring and adaptive management to refine plans based on evolving needs and project impacts.

Mitigation Measures as Part of the LRPs

- **Objective**: Minimize negative impacts and support communities in adapting to changes in resource access and use.

- **Activities**:

  - Introduce alternative income-generating activities such as eco-tourism, sustainable farming practices, and non-timber forest product enterprises.
  - Provide vocational training and skill-building opportunities tailored to the needs of affected households.
  - Facilitate access to microfinance or small grants for community-based conservation and livelihood projects.
  - Ensure access to culturally appropriate resources and activities that preserve traditional practices and knowledge.

Compensation

- **Objective**: Provide equitable and fair compensation to households for unavoidable losses due to project-induced restrictions.

- **Activities**:

  - Develop compensation frameworks based on thorough social and economic assessments.
  - Offer financial compensation or in-kind support, such as provision of agricultural inputs, tools, or access to new land for farming or resource use.
  - Prioritize non-monetary compensation when appropriate, including community development projects such as schools, health clinics, or infrastructure improvements.
  - Establish grievance redress mechanisms to address disputes and ensure transparency and fairness in the compensation process.

4.4. Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF)

(a) IP Population of Project Sites

The Sangha Tri-National (TNS) landscape, covering parts of Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic, is home to diverse Indigenous communities with deep cultural, spiritual, and subsistence ties to the forest ecosystem. These populations play a critical role in the stewardship and conservation of biodiversity within this globally significant region, which is recognized as one of WWF's 200 priority ecoregions. Below is a detailed account of Indigenous Peoples in the TNS across its three main countries.

Cameroon: Indigenous Peoples of the TNS Region

- **Key Groups**: In Cameroon, the TNS landscape is home to Indigenous Peoples. They are among the largest Indigenous groups in Central Africa, known for their nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle.

- **Cultural Ties**: The Indigenous peoples maintain profound cultural and spiritual connections to the forest, which they see as both a source of life and a sacred entity. Their knowledge of forest ecology, including medicinal plants, wildlife behavior, and sustainable harvesting practices, is unparalleled.

- **Livelihoods**: Hunting, fishing, gathering of non-timber forest products (NTFPs), and small-scale agriculture form the cornerstone of their subsistence activities. The Indigenous peoples also engage in barter trade with neighboring farming communities.

- **Challenges**: The Indigenous peoples face land tenure insecurity, marginalization in national policies, and socio-economic challenges such as limited access to education and healthcare. Conservation measures, including anti-poaching initiatives, have sometimes restricted their access to traditional territories.

Republic of Congo: Indigenous Peoples in the TNS Region

- **Key Groups**: The Indigenous Peoples in the Republic of Congo's portion of the TNS are predominantly called Ba'Aka, but are represented under the term "indigenous peoples / peoples autochtones"

- **Cultural Practices**: Communities are celebrated for their intricate knowledge of the forest, particularly their skills in tracking animals and gathering forest products. Their oral traditions, music, and rituals reflect a symbiotic relationship with nature.

- **Livelihoods**: Traditionally reliant on hunting, gathering, and fishing, many Indigenous communities have adapted to external pressures by engaging in occasional paid labor for logging or conservation projects.

- **Challenges**: Land alienation due to logging, agricultural expansion, and conservation activities has displaced many Indigenous families. Policies aimed at conservation sometimes criminalize their traditional practices, undermining their roles as forest custodians.

Central African Republic (CAR): Indigenous Peoples in the TNS Region

- **Key Groups**: The TNS area in CAR hosts indigenous peoples. They are among the most marginalized populations in the country.

- **Cultural Practices**: The Indigenous peoples's lives are deeply intertwined with the forest, relying on it for sustenance, shelter, and cultural identity. Their spiritual practices often involve forest deities and rituals centered around natural elements.

- **Livelihoods**: Subsistence hunting and gathering remain central, though recent pressures have led some Indigenous individuals to work in nearby agricultural fields or engage in artisanal mining.
- **Challenges**: The Indigenous peoples in CAR face significant socio-political marginalization, with limited recognition of their rights to traditional lands and resources. Armed conflict in the region has further exacerbated their vulnerability, disrupting traditional lifestyles and increasing dependence on external aid.

Cross-Cutting Themes in the TNS

1. **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)**:

   o Indigenous Peoples in the TNS possess unique, generational knowledge of forest biodiversity, including species identification, ecosystem dynamics, and sustainable resource management practices. This TEK is crucial for effective biodiversity conservation.

2. **Challenges of Conservation and Land Tenure**:

   o Conservation policies in the TNS often fail to adequately include Indigenous Peoples, resulting in conflicts over resource use and access. Protected areas sometimes restrict Indigenous practices, such as hunting and gathering, without providing alternatives.

3. **Rights and Representation**:

   o Indigenous Peoples in the TNS face systemic marginalization. Limited recognition of customary land rights and lack of meaningful participation in decision-making processes undermine their agency in conservation efforts.

4. **Opportunities for Collaboration**:

   o Integrating Indigenous Peoples as partners in biodiversity conservation through participatory approaches can enhance the success of conservation initiatives. Recognizing and securing land rights, supporting community-driven projects, and respecting traditional practices are essential steps forward.

Relevance to the Global Biodiversity Framework

Indigenous Peoples in the TNS embody the principle of living in harmony with nature. Protecting their rights, integrating their knowledge, and ensuring their meaningful involvement in biodiversity conservation align with the goals of the Global Biodiversity Framework, including:

- **Target 3**: Recognition of the importance of Indigenous Peoples' roles in achieving area-based conservation targets.
- **Target 20**: Ensuring equitable participation and benefit-sharing.
- **Target 21**: Respecting the rights and traditional knowledge of Indigenous Peoples.

Investing in the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in conservation governance in the TNS will not only enhance biodiversity outcomes but also promote social equity and resilience in one of the world's most critical ecoregions.

Reinforcing the TNS Foundation, a fiduciary fund for supporting the three protected areas in Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, and the Central African Republic, offers significant opportunities and potential risks for Indigenous Peoples (IP) in the region. Below is a detailed analysis of the potential positive and negative impacts:

Positive Impacts

1. **Increased Representation in Governance**

   o **Potential Impact**: The inclusion of Indigenous Peoples' representatives in the governance of the TNS Foundation can ensure that their voices are heard and their rights, needs, and traditional practices are respected in decision-making processes.

   o **Rationale**: Their participation can lead to policies that are more equitable and culturally sensitive, fostering mutual trust and collaboration between Indigenous communities and conservation authorities.

2. **Recognition of Traditional Knowledge**

   o **Potential Impact**: Recognizing and integrating Indigenous ecological knowledge (TEK) into conservation strategies can strengthen biodiversity management while validating the cultural contributions of IPs.

   o **Rationale**: Indigenous knowledge about sustainable hunting, gathering, and ecosystem management aligns with conservation goals and can enhance the effectiveness of biodiversity protection measures.

3. **Access to Livelihood Support**

   o **Potential Impact**: If funds are allocated to community-driven projects or benefit-sharing schemes, Indigenous Peoples may gain access to sustainable livelihood opportunities, education, and healthcare.

   o **Rationale**: This would improve their socio-economic conditions while reducing pressure on forest resources, ensuring a balance between conservation and community needs.

4. **Legal and Land Rights Advocacy**

   o **Potential Impact**: Strengthened governance of the fund could advocate for formal recognition of Indigenous land and resource rights, particularly in areas affected by conservation activities.

   o **Rationale**: Securing land tenure can help Indigenous Peoples maintain their traditional practices and benefit from the resources they have historically managed.

5. **Improved Conservation Outcomes through Collaboration**

   o **Potential Impact**: Collaborative governance involving IPs can result in more effective conservation strategies by leveraging Indigenous Peoples' deep understanding of the forest ecosystem.

   o **Rationale**: Shared decision-making may enhance biodiversity outcomes while reducing conflicts between conservation authorities and local communities.

Negative Impacts

1. **Exclusion from Decision-Making Processes**

   o **Potential Impact**: If governance reforms are superficial or do not genuinely include Indigenous representatives, the project risks perpetuating the marginalization of IPs.

   o **Rationale**: Exclusion may lead to decisions that disregard their rights and needs, exacerbating existing inequalities and conflicts.

2. **Restrictions on Traditional Resource Use**

   o **Potential Impact**: Conservation priorities funded by the TNS Foundation may impose stricter restrictions on traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, and gathering in protected areas.

   o **Rationale**: Such restrictions could undermine Indigenous Peoples' subsistence, cultural practices, and autonomy, further entrenching poverty and dependence.

3. **Potential for Misuse or Misallocation of Funds**

   o **Potential Impact**: Weak governance structures may result in the misallocation of funds, with benefits concentrated among elite stakeholders or non-Indigenous groups, leaving Indigenous communities marginalized.

   o **Rationale**: Without robust safeguards and accountability mechanisms, Indigenous Peoples may not receive their fair share of the benefits.

4. **Loss of Cultural Autonomy**

   o **Potential Impact**: Conservation activities funded by the TNS Foundation might prioritize Western scientific approaches over Indigenous knowledge systems, leading to the devaluation of Indigenous cultural practices.

   o **Rationale**: This could erode cultural heritage and alienate Indigenous communities from their traditional ways of life.

5. **Increased Conflict with Conservation Authorities**

   o **Potential Impact**: Expanding conservation enforcement measures, such as anti-poaching patrols, could increase tensions between Indigenous communities and park authorities.

   o **Rationale**: Indigenous Peoples may perceive conservation enforcement as a threat to their autonomy and survival, especially if it involves evictions or criminalization of traditional practices.

6. **Dependence on External Funding**

   o **Potential Impact**: Reliance on the TNS Foundation for community development projects may create dependency, undermining Indigenous Peoples' self-sufficiency and resilience.

   o **Rationale**: Over time, this could reduce their ability to independently manage resources or advocate for their rights.

(c) Mitigation Planning

To ensure alignment with the safeguard standards related to Indigenous Peoples (IPs), the **Foundation for the Tri-National Sangha (FTNS)** should apply the following criteria when selecting activities to be funded:

1. Respect for Indigenous Peoples' Rights

- Activities must explicitly recognize and uphold the rights of IPs as enshrined in national laws, international conventions (e.g., UNDRIP, ILO 169), and WWF's Standards on Indigenous Peoples.

- Activities must avoid adverse impacts on the rights of IPs to their lands, territories, and natural resources.

2. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

- Activities must involve documented FPIC processes with affected IP communities prior to implementation.

- Funding should be contingent on clear evidence that IPs have been adequately consulted, informed of all potential risks, and have provided their consent without coercion.

3. Cultural Sensitivity and Appropriateness

- Activities must respect and preserve the cultural heritage, traditional practices, and spiritual values of IPs.

- Projects involving IP knowledge or traditions must provide mechanisms for equitable benefit-sharing and ensure IPs retain intellectual property rights over their knowledge.

4. Equitable Benefits

- Activities must demonstrate how they will provide culturally appropriate and equitable benefits to IPs, including economic, social, and environmental outcomes.

- Proposals should specify how the activities will enhance livelihoods, build capacity, or improve access to essential services for IPs.

5. Avoidance of Adverse Impacts

- Activities must not lead to the displacement of IPs or restrict their access to resources critical for their livelihoods and cultural practices without mitigation measures and compensation.

- A clear Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) must be conducted, including an assessment of potential adverse impacts on IPs, with proposed mitigation measures.

6. Inclusion and Representation

- Activities must include IPs in the planning, decision-making, and implementation processes.

- Proposals should demonstrate the involvement of IP representatives, community-based organizations, or Indigenous-led organizations in project governance.

7. Capacity Building

- Activities should prioritize capacity-building initiatives for IPs to strengthen their roles as stewards of biodiversity.

- Training and skill-building programs must be designed to align with the needs and aspirations of IP communities.

8. Transparency and Accountability

- Funded projects must ensure transparent mechanisms for tracking benefits and impacts on IPs, with participatory monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

- Grievance redress mechanisms must be accessible to IPs, enabling them to report and resolve concerns.

9. Alignment with Conservation Goals

- Activities should promote the conservation of biodiversity and natural resources in ways that align with the traditional knowledge, values, and practices of IPs.

10. Gender and Vulnerable Group Inclusion

- Activities must ensure gender-sensitive approaches and prioritize the inclusion of Indigenous women, youth, and other vulnerable groups in project design and implementation.

11. Legal and Policy Compliance

- Proposals must comply with relevant national and international laws and policies protecting IPs.

- Projects should demonstrate alignment with FTNS's Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) and Standards on Indigenous Peoples and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (SIPP).

By applying these criteria, FTNS can ensure that its funded activities align with safeguard standards, protect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, and contribute to both conservation and equitable development outcomes.

In addition, the following steps should be taken:

Step 1: Screening and Initial Assessment

1. **Objective**: Identify Indigenous communities and potential social and environmental risks associated with the project, through each park

2. **Actions**:

   - Conduct a **social and environmental screening** to identify the presence of Indigenous Peoples in and around the project area.

   - Map **potential risks** (e.g., restrictions on land use, economic displacement, loss of cultural heritage) and opportunities (e.g., benefit-sharing, knowledge integration) related to the activity

   - Categorize the risks based on severity, likelihood, and scope of impact.

3. **Responsibility**:

- o **Project Implementation Unit (PIU)**: Leads the initial assessment with inputs from biodiversity specialists, social safeguards experts, and local partners.

- o **Independent Experts**: Engage consultants with expertise in Indigenous Peoples' rights and local contexts.

Step 2: Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation (see Stakeholder Engagement Plan)

1. **Objective**: Ensure meaningful participation of Indigenous communities in the project planning process.

2. **Actions**:

- o Identify all **relevant stakeholders**, including Indigenous Peoples, community leaders, civil society organizations (CSOs), and government representatives.

- o Conduct **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)** consultations with Indigenous communities to understand their concerns, expectations, and cultural values.

- o Establish a **grievance redress mechanism (GRM)** for Indigenous Peoples to raise concerns during project planning and implementation.

3. **Responsibility**:

- o **Social Safeguards Specialist**: Facilitates consultations, ensures cultural sensitivity, and documents outcomes.

- o **Local CSOs and Community Leaders**: Support community mobilization and ensure inclusive participation.

- o **Project Donors**: Ensure compliance with social safeguards frameworks (e.g., IFC Performance Standards, UNDRIP).

Step 3: Detailed Risk and Impact Assessment, where needed

1. **Objective**: Conduct a comprehensive assessment of identified risks and their potential impacts on Indigenous communities.

2. **Actions**:

- o Develop a **Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)**, focusing on risks to land use, resource access, livelihoods, cultural heritage, and governance structures.

- o Identify **mitigation measures** tailored to the needs and aspirations of Indigenous communities.

- o Evaluate potential **cumulative impacts** of the project, especially regarding governance and resource use.

3. **Responsibility**:

- o **Independent Environmental and Social Consultants**: Conduct the ESIA.

- Project Steering Committee: Review and validate assessment findings.

Step 4: Development of an Indigenous Peoples Plan

1. **Objective**: Formulate a plan to address identified risks and ensure equitable benefit-sharing with Indigenous Peoples.

2. **Actions**:

   - Draft an **Indigenous Peoples Plan (IPP)** or a similar framework (e.g., Community Development Plan).

   - Incorporate measures to:

     - Ensure **participatory governance** in the fiduciary fund.

     - Protect and promote **land tenure rights**.

     - Mitigate restrictions on **traditional practices**.

     - Enhance **livelihood opportunities** and access to social services.

   - Include a **monitoring and evaluation (M&E)** framework to track progress and adjust the plan as needed.

3. **Responsibility**:

   - **Social Safeguards Specialist**: Develops the IPP.

   - **Project Steering Committee**: Oversees the formulation and approval of the mitigation plan.

Step 5: Implementation of Mitigation Measures

1. **Objective**: Put the mitigation plan into action while ensuring transparency and accountability.

2. **Actions**:

   - Establish mechanisms for **Indigenous representation** in the governance of the TNS Foundation.

   - Implement livelihood programs, benefit-sharing initiatives, and capacity-building workshops for Indigenous communities.

   - Roll out conservation measures that respect traditional practices and recognize Indigenous ecological knowledge.

   - Ensure the GRM is functional, accessible, and responsive.

3. **Responsibility**:

   - **PIU**: Oversees implementation of the IPP and related measures.

   - **Indigenous Representatives**: Act as key stakeholders in governance and monitoring processes.

   - **Local Government and CSOs**: Support on-the-ground implementation.

Step 6: Monitoring and Adaptive Management

1. **Objective**: Continuously monitor the project's social and environmental impacts on Indigenous Peoples and adapt as necessary.

2. **Actions**:

    o Regularly assess the effectiveness of mitigation measures through **participatory monitoring** involving Indigenous communities.

    o Conduct **mid-term evaluations** to identify areas for improvement.

    o Adjust the mitigation plan based on feedback and emerging risks.

3. **Responsibility**:

    o **Independent M&E Specialists**: Conduct evaluations and audits.

    o **Indigenous Representatives**: Participate in monitoring and provide feedback.

    o **Project Steering Committee**: Approve necessary adjustments to the plan.

Key Actors and Their Roles

1. **Project Implementation Unit (PIU)**:

    o Coordinates all steps in planning and implementation.

    o Ensures compliance with safeguards policies.

2. **Social Safeguards Specialist**:

    o Leads stakeholder engagement, consultations, and IPP development.

3. **Independent Experts/Consultants**:

    o Conduct risk assessments, ESIA, and external evaluations.

4. **Indigenous Representatives**:

    o Serve as co-decision-makers in governance structures and monitoring.

5. **Local CSOs**:

    o Facilitate community participation and provide technical support.

6. **Donors (WWF GEF Agency and FTNS community of donors)**:

    o Ensure adherence to funding requirements, provide technical oversight, and enforce accountability.

7. **Local Governments**:

    o Support implementation and ensure alignment with national policies.

By following these steps, the project can minimize risks, promote equitable outcomes, and foster a collaborative relationship with Indigenous Peoples, ensuring their full and fair inclusion in the TNS governance framework.

(d) Steps for Formulating an IPP

WWF's Standard on Indigenous People requires that, regardless of whether Project affected IPs are affected adversely or positively, an IPP needs to be prepared with care and with the full and effective participation of affected communities.

The requirements include screening to confirm and identify affected IP groups in the project areas, social analysis to improve the understanding of the local context and affected communities; a process of free, prior, and informed consent with the affected IPs' communities in order to fully identify their views and to obtain their broad community support to the project; and development of project-specific measures to avoid adverse impacts and enhance culturally appropriate benefits.

Minimum requirements for projects working in areas with IPs are:

- Identification of IP groups through screening;
- Assessment of project impacts;
- Consultations with affected IP communities following FPIC principles and obtain their broad community support;
- Development of sites specific IPs plan (IPP) to avoid adverse impacts and provide culturally appropriate benefits; and
- In activities with no impacts, the requirements could be limited to consultations during implementation to keep local communities informed about project activities and documentation of all consultations held.

(e) Social Assessments

WWF's Standard on Indigenous People requires screening for IPs to assess risks and opportunities and to improve the understanding of the local context and affected communities.

We are here focusing on potential activities to be funded by the FTNS and on considerations to be made when establishing governance tools for the FTNS.

The following activities, potentially funded by the FTNS through the project, may result in impacts on Indigenous Peoples within the targeted areas:

1. **Protected Area Management and Enforcement**

   o **Potential Impacts:** Increased restrictions on access to traditional lands and resources due to stricter conservation enforcement measures. This could disrupt hunting, gathering, and other livelihood activities essential to Indigenous Peoples.

   o **Opportunities:** These activities could promote co-management arrangements that involve Indigenous Peoples in conservation efforts, respecting their traditional knowledge and practices.

2. **Infrastructure Development for Conservation**

   o **Potential Impacts:** Construction of facilities such as ranger posts or eco-tourism infrastructure may require land use that overlaps with Indigenous Peoples' traditional territories, potentially leading to loss of access or displacement.

   o **Opportunities:** Such activities could create employment opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and foster capacity-building in conservation-related roles.

3. **Ecotourism Initiatives**

   o **Potential Impacts:** Ecotourism development may lead to the commercialization of Indigenous cultural practices or increased pressure on local resources, negatively affecting traditional lifestyles.

   o **Opportunities:** Properly designed ecotourism projects can empower Indigenous Peoples through revenue-sharing models, showcasing their cultural heritage and fostering economic benefits.

4. **Livelihood Diversification Programs**

   o **Potential Impacts:** Efforts to transition Indigenous Peoples to alternative livelihoods may unintentionally undermine traditional knowledge systems and cultural identity.

   o **Opportunities:** These programs can improve income levels and resilience if designed in consultation with Indigenous communities, ensuring alignment with their needs and values.

5. **Biodiversity Monitoring and Anti-Poaching Activities**

   o **Potential Impacts:** Strengthened anti-poaching measures may inadvertently criminalize traditional hunting practices of Indigenous Peoples if not clearly distinguished from illegal activities.

   o **Opportunities:** Integrating Indigenous knowledge into monitoring systems can improve conservation outcomes while providing recognition and inclusion for Indigenous Peoples.

6. **Land-Use Zoning and Resource Management Plans**

   o **Potential Impacts:** Land-use zoning efforts may impose restrictions on areas traditionally used by Indigenous Peoples, potentially leading to tensions or loss of access to critical resources.

   o **Opportunities:** Collaborative planning processes can formalize Indigenous land rights and provide avenues for sustainable co-management of resources.

7. **Capacity-Building and Education Programs**

   o **Potential Impacts:** Standardized training programs may fail to account for Indigenous knowledge systems or unique educational needs, creating barriers to meaningful participation.

   o **Opportunities:** Tailored capacity-building programs can enhance Indigenous leadership in conservation efforts and strengthen their advocacy capabilities.

By screening these activities carefully, identifying risks, and engaging Indigenous Peoples through participatory consultations, the project can mitigate potential adverse impacts and ensure the realization of equitable and culturally appropriate benefits.

(f)   Development of IP Plans (IPP)

Based on the results of the social assessments, an IP Plan shall be developed for each project site.

The contents of the IPP will depend on the specific project activities identified and the impacts these activities may have on IPs in the project area. As a minimum, the IPP should include the following information:

- ✓ Description of the IPs affected by the proposed activity;
- ✓ Summary of the proposed activity;
- ✓ Detailed description of IPs' participation and consultation process during implementation;
- ✓ Description of how the project will ensure culturally appropriate benefits and avoid or mitigate adverse impacts;
- ✓ Budget;
- ✓ Mechanism for complaints and conflict resolution; and
- ✓ Monitoring and evaluation system that includes monitoring of particular issues and measures concerning indigenous communities.

For project activities that may result in changes in IPs' access to livelihoods , the provisions of the Process Framework (Section 4.5) should be followed.

(g)   Free, Prior and Informed Consent Framework

It is to be noted that field activities in each of the three (3) protected areas is subject to FPIC as per each park's own safeguard measures and FPIC protocol. The FTNS will be respectful of FPIC in the sense that any activity funded through FTNS and potentially affecting Indigenous Peoples should follow FPIC principles.

Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is an approach for ensuring that the rights of IPs are guaranteed in any decision that may negatively affect their lands, territories or livelihoods. It ensures that they have the right to give or withhold their consent to these activities without fear of reprisal or coercion, in a timeframe suited to their own culture, and with the resources to make informed decisions.

FPIC is composed of four separate components:

- Free—Without coercion, intimidation, manipulation, threat or bribery.
- Prior—indicates that consent has been sought sufficiently in advance, before any project activities have been authorized or commenced, and that the time requirements of the indigenous community's consultation/consensus processes have been respected.
- Informed—Information is provided in a language and form that are easily understood by the community, covering the nature, scope, purpose, duration and locality of the project or activity as well as information about areas that will be affected; economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts, all involved actors, and the procedures that the project or activity may entail.
- Consent—The right of IPs to give or withhold their consent to any decision that will impact their lands, territories, resources, and livelihoods.

The processes of consultation and obtaining FPIC will be applied to all the aspects of the project (financed under WWF) that may negatively affect the rights of the IPs and ethnic minorities. FPIC will be required on any matters that may negatively affect the rights and interests, water areas, lands, resources, territories (whether titled or untitled to the people in question) and traditional livelihoods of the IPs concerned.

Thus, FPIC is integral to the execution of the proposed project, as the project areas includes diverse indigenous communities. WWF recognizes the strong cultural and spiritual ties many IP groups have to their lands and territories and committed to strengthen these ties in all WWF/GEF/GCF funded projects. FPIC gives IPs the freedom to determine their own development path to promoting conservation sustainably. The following checklist (Box 1) may assist in helping to determine whether some Project activities may require an FPIC process

> **Box 1. Checklist for appraising whether an activity may require an FPIC Process**
>
> 1. Will the activity involve the use, taking or damage of cultural, intellectual, religious and/or spiritual property from IPs?
> 2. Will the activity adopt or implement any legislative or administrative measures that will affect the rights, lands, territories and/or resources of IPs (e.g. in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources; land reform; legal reforms that may discriminate de jure or de facto against IPs, etc.)?
> 3. Will the activity involve natural resource extraction such as logging or mining or agricultural development on the lands/territories of IPs?
> 4. Will the activity involve any decisions that will affect the status of IPs' rights to their lands/territories/water resources, resources or livelihoods?
> 5. Will the activity involve the accessing of traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities?
> 6. Will the activity affect IPs' political, legal, economic, social, or cultural institutions and/or practices?
> 7. Will the activity involve making commercial use of natural and/or cultural resources on lands subject to traditional ownership and/or under customary use by IPs?
> 8. Will the activity involve decisions regarding benefit-sharing arrangements, when benefits are derived from the lands/territories/resources of IPs (e.g. natural resource management or extractive industries)?
> 9. Will the activity have an impact on the continuance of the relationship of the IPs with their land or their culture?
> 10. Will the interventions/activities restrict on access to NTFPs, timber, lands, etc. and other sources of livelihoods and community resources?

If the answer is 'Yes' to any of these questions in Box 1, it is likely that FPIC will be required of the potentially affected indigenous peoples for the activity that may result in the impacts identified in the questions. When an FPIC process is required, a stakeholder consultation process will need to be initiated to define and agree on an FPIC process with the community or communities. The IPs who may be affected by the Project will have a central role in defining the FPIC process, based on their own cultural and governance practices. The consultation process should be launched as early as possible to ensure full, effective and meaningful participation of IPs.

All consultations with IPs should be carried out in good faith with the objective of seeking agreement or consent. Consultation and consent is about IPs' right to meaningfully and effectively participate in decision-making on matters that may affect them. Consultations and information disclosure are integral parts of FPIC process and any development support planning for IPs to ensure that the priorities, preferences, and needs of the indigenous groups are taken into consideration adequately. With that objective in view, a strategy for consultation with IPs has been proposed so that all consultations are conducted in a manner to ensure full and effective participation. The approach of full and effective participation is primarily based upon transparent, good faith interactions, so that everyone in the community is empowered to join fully in the decision-making process. It includes providing information in a language and manner the community understands and, in a timeframe, compatible with the community's cultural norms.

The affected IPs will be actively engaged in all stages of the project cycle, including project preparation, and feedback of consultations with the IPs will be reflected in the project design, followed by disclosure. Their participation in project preparation and planning has informed project design and will continue to actively participate in the project execution. Once the IPP or LRP is prepared, it will be translated into local languages (as applicable) and made available to them before implementation, including in formats other than written documents if and when requested by the communities.

FTNS shall ensure adequate flow of funds for consultation and facilitation of planned activities within the IPP. Project brochures and pamphlet with infographic containing basic information such as sub-project location, impact estimates, and mitigation measures proposed, and implementation schedule will be prepared, translated into a language understandable to the IPs, and distributed among them. If literacy is low in the communities, other means of communication must also be agreed upon with them, especially targeting community members who may have lower literacy levels.

A range of consultative methods will be adopted to carry out consultation including, but not limited to: focus group discussions (FGDs), public meetings, community discussions, and in-depth and key informant interviews; in addition to the censuses and socioeconomic surveys.

The key stakeholders to be consulted during screening, impact assessment; design and implementation of IPP, LRP and Process Framework (PF) include:

- All affected persons belonging to IPs/marginalized groups;
- Appropriate government Departments/Ministries
- Provincial and municipal government representatives;
- Insert relevant community cooperatives, management structures, umbrella bodies, etc.;
- The private sector:
- Academia representatives.

The project will ensure adequate representation of each group of stakeholders mentioned above while conducting consultations using various tools and approaches.

The views of IPs communities are to be considered during execution of project activities, while respecting their practices, beliefs and cultural preferences. The outcome of the consultations will be documented into the periodical reports and included in project's trimester progress reports. The Project Manager, with support of the Safeguards Specialist will also ensure that affected persons are involved in the decision-making process.

Procedures to seek FPIC

Project interventions and activities adversely affecting the IPs, therefore, need to follow a process of free, prior, and informed consent, with the affected IPs in order to fully identify their views and to seek their broad community support to the project; and development of project-specific measures to avoid adverse impacts and enhance culturally appropriate benefits.

Community involvement is a critical component of FPIC, as FPIC is a collective process, rather than an individual decision. In practice, FPIC is implemented through a participatory process involving all affected groups that is carried out prior to the finalization or implementation of any project activities, decisions or development plans. FPIC is established through good faith negotiation between the project and affected IPs. A facilitator should support this process, a person who will be available throughout the Project, who speaks the necessary languages and is aware of the project context. This person may or may not be part of FTNS Executive management, but should be agreeable to all parties involved.

Box 2 below outlines some generic steps to be followed for FPIC with the affected IPs in order to seek their broad community support.

Box 2. Steps for Seeking FPIC from Project Affected Indigenous Peoples
1. Identify communities, sub-groups within communities, and other stakeholders with potential interests/rights (both customary and legal) on the land or other natural

resources that are proposed to be developed, managed, utilized, or impacted by the proposed project activity.

2. Identify any rights (customary and legal) or claims of these communities to land or resources (e.g., water rights, water access points, or rights to hunt or extract forest products) that overlap or are adjacent to the site(s) or area(s) of the proposed project activity;

3. Identify whether the proposed project activity may diminish the rights, claims, or interests identified in Step 2 above and also identify natural resources that may be impacted by this project and the legal and customary laws that govern these resources;

4. Provide the details of proposed project activities to be implemented along with their likely impacts on IPs either positively or negatively, as well as the corresponding proposed mitigation measures in a language or means of communication understandable by the affected IPs;

5. All project information provided to IPs should be in a form appropriate to local needs. Local languages should usually be used and efforts should be made to include all community members, including women and members of different generations and social groups (e.g. clans and socioeconomic background);

6. Selection of facilitator, who will be available throughout the Project, who speaks the necessary languages and is aware of the project context, and is culturally and gender sensitive. The facilitator should be trustworthy to affected IPs. It will also be helpful to involve any actors which are likely to be involved in implementing the FPIC process, such as local or national authorities

7. If the IP communities are organized in community associations or umbrella organizations, these should usually be consulted.

8. Provide sufficient time for IPs' decision-making processes (it means allocate sufficient time for internal decision-making processes to reach conclusions that are considered legitimate by the majority of the concerned participants)

9. Support a process to create a mutually respected decision-making structure in cases where two or more communities claim rights over a project site.

10. If FPIC is not familiar to the community, engage in a dialogue to identify existing decision-making structures that support the principles underlying FPIC.

11. Identify the community-selected representative(s) or "focal people" for decision making purpose-- identification of the decisionmakers and parties to the negotiation.

12. Agree on the decisionmakers or signatory parties and/or customary binding practice that will be used to conclude the agreement, introducing the chosen representatives, their role in the community, how they were chosen, their responsibility and role as representatives;

13. If consent is reached, document agreed upon outcomes/activities that are to be included into the project, and agree on a feedback and a project grievance redress mechanism. Agreements reached must be mutual and recognized by all parties, taking into consideration customary modes of decision-making and consensus-seeking. These may include votes, a show of hands, the signing of a document witnessed by a third party, performing a ritual ceremony that makes the agreement binding, and so forth;

14. When seeking "broad community consent/support" for the project, it should be ensured that all relevant social groups of the community have been adequately consulted. This may mean the project staff have to seek out marginalized members, or those who don't have decision-making power, such as women. When this is the case and the "broad" majority is overall positive about the project, it would be appropriate to conclude that broad community support/consent has been achieved. Consensus building approaches are often the norm, but "broad community consent/support" does not mean that everyone has to agree to a given project;

15. When the community agrees on the project, document the agreement process and outcomes including benefits, compensation, or mitigation to the community, commensurate with the loss of use of land or resources in forms and languages accessible

and made publicly available to all members of the community, providing for stakeholder review and authentication;

16. The agreements or special design features providing the basis for broad community support should be described in the IPs Plan; any disagreements should also be documented; and

17. Agree on jointly defined modes of monitoring and verifying agreements as well as their related procedures: how these tasks will be carried out during project implementation, and the commission of independent periodic reviews (if considered) at intervals satisfactory to all interest groups.

(h)   Disclosure

The final IPPF and PF and any site specific IPPs and LRPs will be disclosed on the website of the executing agency FTNS and the website of WWF and made available to affected IPs; information dissemination and consultation will continue throughout project execution. Summaries of IPPs and mitigation measures proposed in IPPs will be translated into french and paper copies will be made available to the affected persons in the office of relevant local authorities.

(i)   Institutional and monitoring arrangements

The Senior ESS and Gender officer of FTNS will be responsible for the development and implementation of the IPPF and any IPP, with support from the FTNS Programme manager on logistical matters (e.g., conducting field visits, reaching out to IP communities, convening meetings, etc.).

The Senior ESS and Gender officer will periodically report on the implementation of the IPPF/IPP to FTNS Executive Director and WWF US. Monitoring and reporting will be undertaken together with reporting on the other ESMF commitments (as indicated in Section 5.4).

4.5.   Cultural Heritage Impacts Mitigation Measure

The project encompasses activities that could affect both tangible and intangible cultural heritage within the targeted landscapes. These impacts may arise from activities such as land-use planning, infrastructure development, and tourism initiatives, which may intersect with areas of cultural significance, sacred sites, or traditional knowledge systems of local communities, particularly Indigenous Peoples.

Key cultural heritage impacts could include damage or loss of physical cultural resources, disruption of sacred rituals or ceremonies, and potential commercialization of traditional knowledge and practices. The project must adhere to WWF's Standard on Cultural Heritage, ensuring that all activities respect the cultural values, traditions, and rights of affected communities. Mitigation measures will focus on identifying cultural heritage sites during project planning, involving communities in decision-making processes, and adopting strategies that preserve and promote cultural heritage while fostering sustainable development.

Proactive measures will include robust consultation with Indigenous Peoples and other local communities, development of cultural heritage management plans, and compliance with national and international legal frameworks governing cultural resources. Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) processes will guide decision-making to prevent adverse impacts and enhance culturally appropriate benefits.

Table 5: Cultural Heritage Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Project Activity	Potential Impact	Proposed Mitigation Measure	Responsible Party
Protected Area Zoning and Resource Management	Restriction of access to sacred or culturally significant sites.	Conduct cultural heritage assessments; map and document sacred sites; ensure FPIC is obtained before implementing zoning changes.	Project Management Unit (FTNS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT), FTNS
Infrastructure Development (e.g., ranger posts, tourism)	Destruction or alteration of cultural heritage sites or landscapes.	Engage communities to identify culturally sensitive areas; design infrastructure to avoid or minimize impacts; conduct archaeological studies before construction.	FTNS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT, Contractors
Ecotourism Development	Commercialization or misrepresentation of cultural practices and traditions.	Develop cultural tourism guidelines with community input; ensure revenue-sharing agreements that benefit cultural heritage preservation efforts.	FTNS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT, Ecotourism Operators
Biodiversity Monitoring and Anti-Poaching Activities	Unintentional disturbance to sacred or ceremonial sites during field operations.	Train field staff on cultural sensitivity; establish no-go zones for conservation teams in consultation with communities; integrate traditional ecological knowledge into plans.	FTNS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT, Field Staff
Land-Use Planning	Potential loss or modification of intangible cultural heritage linked to natural resources.	Integrate cultural considerations into land-use plans; engage traditional leaders and knowledge holders in planning processes.	FTNS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT, Local Authorities
Livelihood Diversification Programs	Undermining of traditional knowledge and practices through focus on alternative,	Ensure livelihood programs are co-designed with communities; include capacity-building to strengthen cultural	FTNS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT, NGOs

	non-traditional livelihoods.	heritage alongside new livelihood options.	
Capacity-Building and Community Engagement	Exclusion of cultural heritage considerations in conservation training programs.	Develop training materials inclusive of cultural heritage protection; involve cultural representatives in program design and delivery.	FTNS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT, Trainers

5. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

5.1. Procedures for the Identification and Management of Environmental and Social Impacts

The following is an exclusion list of activities that will not be financed by the FTNS project. This includes activities that:

1. Lead to land management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water. Examples include, but are not limited to: the felling of trees in core zones and critical watersheds; activities involving quarrying and mining; commercial logging; or dredge fishing.
2. Negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/endangered species.
3. Significantly increase GHG emissions.
4. Use genetically modified organisms or modern biotechnologies or their products.
5. Involve the procurement and/or use of pesticides and other chemicals specified as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention or within categories IA, IB, or II by the World Health Organization.
6. Develop forest plantations.
7. Result in the loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species.
8. Involve the procurement or use of weapons and munitions or fund military activities.
9. Lead to private land acquisition and/or physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation of people, including non-titled and migrant people.
10. Contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist.
11. Involve illegal child labor, forced labor, sexual exploitation or other forms of exploitation.
12. Adversely affect indigenous peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area.
13. Negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities.

In advance of the initiation of any project activity, the Safeguards Specialist should fill in detailed information regarding the nature of the activity and its specific location in the *Safeguards Eligibility and Impacts Screening* form (Annex 1). Part 1 of this form comprises of basic information regarding the activity; Part 2 contains basic "pre-screening" questions. If the response to any of the questions in these two parts is *"Yes",* the activity will be deemed ineligible for funding under the Project. The executing partners will thus be required to change the nature

or location of the proposed activity so that it complies with all safeguards requirements and all responses in the *Safeguards Eligibility and Impacts Screening* form are negative.

If the activity is deemed eligible according to Part 2, an environmental and social screening procedure will be carried out in accordance with Part 3 of *Safeguard Eligibility and Impacts Screening* format, which is based on the WWF's SIPP and applicable to Cameroon, CAR and RoC laws and regulations. The executing partners shall respond to the specific questions in Part 3 of the form, provide general conclusions regarding the main environmental and social impacts of each proposed activity, outline the required permits or clearances, and specify whether any additional assessments or safeguard documents (e.g., ESMP) should be prepared.

Issues that are considered as part of this environmental and social screening include the following:

a. Need for government-land acquisition;

b. Environmental impacts (e.g., dust, noise, smoke, ground vibration, pollution, flooding, etc.) and loss or damage to natural habitat;

c. Social impacts: identification of vulnerable groups or indigenous peoples, impacts on community resources, impacts on livelihoods and socio-economic opportunities, restrictions of access to natural resources, land usage conflicts, impacts on tangible or intangible cultural heritage, etc.; and

d. Health and safety issues (both for workers and for local communities).

The screening of each activity should be undertaken by the Safeguards Specialist. If the screening process indicates that additional assessments or safeguards documents shall be prepared, these should be carried out by the executing partners prior to the start of activities.

If the screening reveals adverse environmental or social impacts that may arise from the planned activity, an ESMP should be prepared. The ESMP should be prepared by the Safeguards Specialist, in collaboration with the Project Manager(s).

5.2.   Guidelines for ESMP Development

In case that the Environmental and Social screening process identifies any adverse environmental or social impacts as a result of specific project activities, the Safeguards Specialist in collaboration with the Project Manager(s) should develop a site- and activity-specific ESMP. The ESMP should be prepared before the initiation of the project activity and closely follow the guidance provided in this ESMF.

The ESMP should describe adverse environmental and social impacts that are expected to occur as a result of the specific project activity, outline concrete measures that should be undertaken to avoid or mitigate these impacts, and specify the implementation arrangements for administering these measures (including institutional structures, roles, communication, consultations, and reporting procedures).

The structure of the ESMP should be as follows:

(i)   *A concise introduction*: explaining the context and objectives of the ESMP, the connection of the proposed activity to the project, and the findings of the screening process.

(ii)   *Project description:* Objective and description of activities, nature and scope of the project (location with map, construction and/or operation processes, equipment to be used, site facilities and workers and their camps; bill of quantities if civil works are involved, activity schedule).

(iii) **Baseline environmental and social data:** Key environmental information or measurements such as topography, land use and water uses, soil types, and water quality/pollution; and data on socioeconomic conditions of the local population. Photos showing the existing conditions of the project sites should also be included.

(iv) **Expected impacts and mitigation measures:** Description of specific environmental and social impacts of the activity and corresponding mitigation measures.

(v) **ESMP implementation arrangements**: Responsibilities for design, bidding and contracts where relevant, monitoring, reporting, recording and auditing.

(vi) **Capacity Need and Budget:** Capacity needed for the implementation of the ESMP and cost estimates for implementation of the ESMP.

(vii) **Consultation and Disclosure Mechanisms:** Timeline and format of disclosure.

(viii) **Monitoring:** Environmental and social compliance monitoring with responsibilities.

(ix) **Grievance Mechanism:** Provide information about the grievance mechanism, how PAPs can access it, and the grievance redress process.

(x) **A site-specific community and stakeholder engagement plan:** In order to ensure that local communities and other relevant stakeholders are fully involved in the implementation of the ESMP, a stakeholder engagement plan should be included in the ESMP. Specific guidelines on community engagement are provided in Section 5.8 below.

5.3. Stakeholders' Role & Responsibilities in the ESMF Implementation

(a) General

The institutional arrangement (Figure X) for project implementation includes WWF as the GBFF Agency, FTNS as the Lead Executing Agency, and a Project Steering Committee.

Figure X. Project Institutional Arrangements
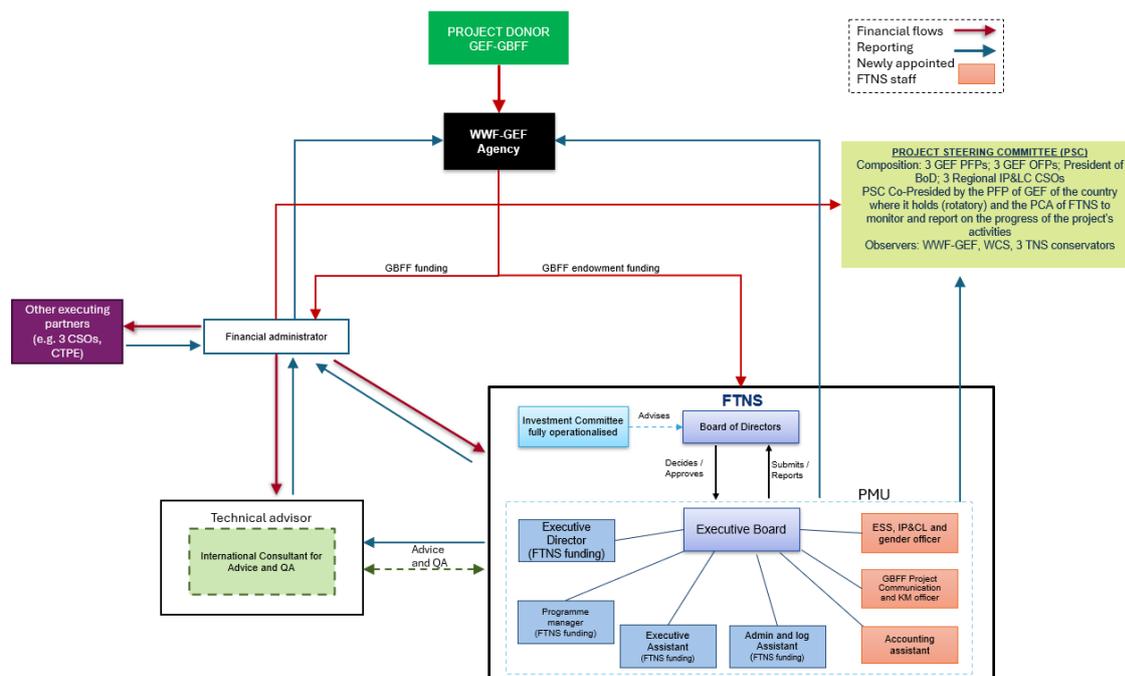
FTNS is the Lead Executing Agency for the project, which will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of project activities. As part of its responsibilities, FTNS executive management will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the project, monitoring and reporting as well as GEF procedures and policies compliance, while project financial administration (including issuing sub-grants) will be managed by WWF Cameroon. The FTNS executive Board in addition to its current staff will be comprised of a full-time Senior ESS and Gender officer. Additionally, a part-time external international Consultant will be recruited to advice the executive board on key aspects of project implementation and ensure quality assurance of the documentation/reports developed during the project timeframe.

Project Steering Committee (PSC):

WWF GEF Agency: WWF-US, through its WWF GEF Agency will: (i) provide consistent and regular project oversight to ensure the achievement of project objectives; (ii) liaise between the project and the GEF Secretariat; (iii) report on project progress to GEF Secretariat (annual Project Implementation Report); (iv) ensure that both GEF and WWF policy requirements and standards are applied and met (i.e. reporting obligations, technical, fiduciary, M&E); (v) approve annual workplan and budget; (vi) approve budget revisions, certify fund availability and transfer funds; (vii) organize the terminal evaluation and review project audits; (viii) certify project operational and financial completion, and (ix) provide no-objection to key terms of reference for project management unit.

(b) Safeguards Implementation

Specific arrangements and responsibilities related to the implementation of environmental and social safeguards requirements, as stated in this ESMF/PF are as follows:

Lead executing agency (FTNS):

- Definition of safeguard policies and operational procedures
- Establishment of safeguard related criteria to select activities
- Monitoring of criteria compliance

Project Steering Committee:

- Engagement of IP&LC and Gender CSOs in project overview and steering during PSC annual meetings
- Ensuring monitoring feedback from IP&LC and Gender CSOs involved in project implementation

WWF GEF Agency:

- Overall oversight and monitoring of compliance with safeguards commitments.
- Support and specific recommendations on specific safeguard issues if needed.

FTNS Executive Management

- FTNS Executive Director is ultimately responsible to ensure that safeguards are implemented and complied with;
- FTNS program manager, responsible for FTNS M&E, including for the GBFF project, works closely with Senior ESS and Gender officer (see below)
- Senior ESS and Gender officer to ensure proper implementation and monitoring of all safeguards and related plans, including the GRM, etc.

Senior ESS and Gender officer within FTNS:

- Coordination of capacity building activities

- Support to project implementation and monitoring on safeguards and gender

5.4. Monitoring

The compliance of Project activities with the ESMF will be thoroughly monitored by various entities at different stages of preparation and implementation.

- ***Monitoring at the project level***

The Senior ESS and Gender officer, with support from WWF and WCS offices, will monitor the implementation of this ESMF within the FTNS.

- ***Monitoring at the field activity level***

The Senior ESS and Gender officer of the FTNS will regularly liaise with WWF and WCS as well as with each park management structure to ensure FTNS funds are disbursed according to the present ESMF and in agreement with the FTNS safeguard policy.

Disbursement of project funds will be contingent upon their full compliance with the safeguards requirements.

- ***Monitoring at the agency level***

WWF as the project's implementing agency and FTNS as the executing agency are responsible to oversee compliance with the ESMF.

In order to facilitate compliance monitoring, FTNS will include information on the status of ESMF implementation in the six-month Project Progress Reports (PPRs) and the annual Project Implementation Review (PIR) reports.

5.5. Community Engagement

Community consultation has been an integral part of these assessments as well as the proposed project design and will be carried out as a continuous process through the project cycle. This section describes the community engagement during project preparation and implementation. This section is an overview, whereas the full details will be written out in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan.

(a) Community engagement during Project Preparation

Community engagement happened before Project Preparation within each park, under the responsibility of FTNS EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT and of WWF Cameroon, WWF Congo and WCS in CAR. Such regular consultations on the FTNS landscape management are managed by each of the park's own safeguard management framework.

In addition, CSOs were consulted by email and phone (list attached in the Stakeholder Engagement Plan).

Modality of Engaging Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in Project Design

1. **Proportionality and Efficiency in Stakeholder Engagement**

- o The GEF Stakeholder Engagement Policy encourages a proportional approach to stakeholder engagement, meaning that the intensity and methodology of consultations must align with the nature, scope, and scale of the project.
- o For a project focused on structuring a trust fund, which involves primarily strategic and financial decisions, consultations with decision-makers and key organizational representatives are deemed more effective.

2. **Representativeness and Inclusion**
   - o The GEF and international safeguard standards recognize that civil society organizations, including those representing Indigenous Peoples, play a critical role in representing the interests of local communities.
   - o By engaging competent representatives, such as national or regional Indigenous networks, the project ensures that the perspectives of the affected communities are indirectly but substantively included, without requiring consultations in every village.

3. **Capacity to Address Complex Issues**
   - o Designing a trust fund requires an in-depth understanding of financial mechanisms, international environmental policies, and national legal frameworks. Civil society representatives with training and experience in these areas are better equipped to contribute to such discussions than direct village consultations, which may be inadequate for addressing technical aspects.

4. **Respect for Logistical and Resource Constraints**
   - o The GEF due diligence policies account for time and resource constraints during the project preparation phase. While direct village consultations may be desirable in some contexts, they are often unrealistic for projects with tight deadlines, such as those supported by GBFF and WWF.

5. **Preparation Phase vs. Implementation Phase**
   - o The GEF Policy on Environmental and Social Safeguards recommends distinguishing the project preparation phase (where strategic consultations are sufficient) from the implementation phase (where deeper engagement with affected communities may be required).
   - o Once the trust fund is structured, specific local consultations can be organized, ensuring progressive inclusion.

6. **Alignment with Financial Partners**
   - o Both GBFF and WWF emphasize stakeholder engagement adapted to context. By prioritizing consultations with experts and national or regional representatives, the approach ensures alignment with their expectations for efficiency and prioritization.

7. **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) Approach**
   - o While FPIC is essential for projects directly affecting Indigenous Peoples, engaging their representatives during this phase ensures that their rights are respected and informs future steps. This approach avoids poorly designed or rushed consultations, which could lead to mistrust.
   - o The division between the levels of "supervision" (Trust Fund Supervisory Board) and "implementation"(parks) implies that FPIC will be secured by the parks and verified by the Trust Fund Supervisory Board.

8. **Co-Design with Key Stakeholders**
   - o The structuring of trust funds is inherently complex and requires a framework for dialogue among strategic stakeholders with negotiation capacity and expertise. Civil society representatives from the three countries play a crucial intermediary role in articulating local needs within the global framework.
   - o During the selection of projects to be financed by the trust fund, in-depth consultations will be conducted by the parks and overseen by the Trust Fund

Supervisory Board to ensure the alignment of financing with needs, establish a baseline, and support implementation.

Summary of Civil Society Inputs and Recommendations for Project Preparation

1. **Governance and Inclusion**:
   o Strengthen the governance of the FTNS to ensure diversity, expertise, and representation of Indigenous Peoples and local communities (PACL). This includes:
      ▪ Adapting the composition of the FTNS Board of Directors (BoD) to reflect TNS landscape needs and diversifying expertise.
      ▪ Designating focal points for gender and Indigenous Peoples within civil society to ensure meaningful representation.
      ▪ Conducting pre-Board consultations with local communities and civil society to integrate grassroots perspectives.
   o Operationalize inclusive decision-making structures by ensuring systematic consultation with PACL representatives and their active participation in governance and project design.

2. **Strengthening Social and Environmental Safeguards (ESS)**:
   o Develop and implement a robust Environmental and Social Management System (ESMS) tailored to TNS landscape dynamics, incorporating ESS, gender equality, and risk management frameworks.
   o Train FTNS members, staff, and protected area personnel on ESS policies, Indigenous Peoples' rights, and participatory approaches, including Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC).
   o Establish independent grievance mechanisms managed by communities and civil society organizations to address complaints effectively and prevent conflicts of interest. Examples like CEFAID in Lobéké could provide models for such systems.

3. **Engagement with PACL and Gender Integration**:
   o Enhance the engagement of PACL through consultations, capacity-building initiatives, and representation in governance structures.
   o Promote women's leadership and participation by addressing barriers to education, economic opportunities, and decision-making.
   o Develop gender-sensitive approaches, including gender-sensitization campaigns, grievance systems tailored for women, and support for women-led income-generating activities (e.g., NTFP value chains and sustainable agriculture).

4. **Monitoring and Knowledge Sharing**:
   o Incorporate monitoring systems that value and document Indigenous knowledge and practices. Use participatory methods to identify and scale good practices.
   o Conduct diagnostics to understand PACL needs, evaluate existing initiatives, and identify gaps before launching activities.
   o Promote cross-border exchanges and regional workshops to share experiences and lessons among stakeholders from the three TNS countries.

5. **Economic Opportunities and Capacity Building**:

- Support sustainable livelihoods aligned with PACL needs and aspirations, ensuring compliance with international human rights standards.

- Invest in training programs to enhance the capacities of civil society and local actors in governance, project management, and advocacy.

- Mobilize additional funding to support inclusive development projects and provide resources for community-driven initiatives.

6. **Ethical Standards and Conflict Mitigation**:

- Strengthen the ethical framework for eco-guards, using the Cameroon model as an example, to minimize human rights abuses and improve community relationships.

- Establish independent conflict resolution platforms, such as the APDS system, to address disputes between eco-guards and local communities.

7. **Operational Considerations**:

- Conduct consultations during favorable times (e.g., avoiding traditional activity periods) to ensure meaningful participation.

- Allocate resources for field consultations with the help of local civil society groups and regional consultants to gather detailed and accurate data.

By addressing these recommendations, the project can foster an inclusive and equitable implementation process that respects the rights and priorities of PACL while strengthening conservation outcomes in the TNS landscape

(b)   Community engagement during ESMF/PF Preparation

A workshop was organized in Douala from the 14th to the 16th of January 2025. Report is attached to the Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The invitees and programme are detailed below:

Cameroon

- **National IP Network:** RACOPY – Elisabeth MBEZELE FOUDA | racopy05@yahoo.fr

- **Local CSO:** ASABUK / Bibi Joseph | josephjohnsonbibi@gmail.com

- **Gender:** AFFEBEN – Mirianda / Roger ABONO ZOUM | aafeeo@gmail.com / aafebeno@yahoo.com

Central African Republic (CAR)

- **National IP Network:** REPALCA – Kozo Desire | kozo.yobes@gmail.com

- **Local CSO:** Centre for Human Rights – Gervais Pamongui | gervais_pamongui@yahoo.com

- **Gender:** OFCA – Mme Marguerite RAMADAN | marguerite.ramadan@ymail.com

Congo

- **National IP Network:** RENAPAC – Parfait Dihoukamba | pdihoukamba@gmail.com

- **Local CSO:** GCA – (to be confirmed)

- **Gender:** REFADD – Monique Yigbedek | moniqueyigbedek@yahoo.fr

Additionally, I suggest inviting the **REPALEAC network**, a Central African IP network:

- **Regional Head:** Itongwa Joseph | jitongwa71@gmail.com

- **National Representative Cameroon:** Helene Ayemondo | ayemondocaddap@yahoo.com

- **National Representative Congo:** Parfait Dihoukamba (already included above)

- **National Representative CAR:** Kozo Desire (already included above)

Consultation Workshop with CSOs
Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025
Facilitator: Marine Gauthier

Participants: CSOs representing IPLCs and gender (11 people), Marine, Estella

Session 1: Introduction and In-Depth Discussion on the GBFF Project

- **Time:** 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

  - **Objective:** Present a detailed overview of the GBFF project, its objectives, and components, and enable an in-depth discussion to clarify expectations and address questions.

  - **Activities:**

    - **Detailed Presentation:**

      - Context and objectives of the project.

      - Key components and expected outcomes.

      - Specific approaches to safeguards and gender.

    - **Open Discussion:**

      - Questions and comments from CSOs on technical and strategic aspects of the project.

- Clarification of expectations regarding CSOs.
  - **Facilitator:** Marine

Time: 11:30 AM – 11:45 AM
Activity: Coffee Break

Session 2: Challenges and Opportunities Related to Safeguards, Gender, and IPLCs

- **Time:** 11:45 AM – 1:00 PM
  - **Objective:** Identify and discuss challenges and opportunities related to safeguards, gender, and benefits for IPLCs, including grievance redress mechanisms (GRM).
  - **Activities:** Group Work
    - **Group Discussions:**
      - Identify safeguard-related risks in the TNS context.
      - Analyze opportunities to improve gender integration.
      - Examine specific benefits for IPLCs and the functioning of GRMs.
    - **Plenary Synthesis:** Presentation of key observations and group feedback.
  - **Facilitator:** Marine

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Activity: Lunch

Session 3: Practical Roles of CSOs in the GBFF Project and FTNS

- **Time:** 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM
  - **Objective:** Define the concrete roles of CSOs in implementing existing measures and discuss their practical involvement in FTNS operations.
  - **Activities:**
    - **Presentation:**
      - Anticipated roles of CSOs in safeguards and gender measures.
      - Key aspects of existing approaches and areas where CSOs can provide practical contributions.
    - **Discussion:** Suggestions for amendments and clarifications to enhance CSO involvement.
  - **Facilitator:** Marine

Time: 3:30 PM – 3:45 PM
Activity: Coffee Break

Session 4: Finalization of Approaches and Synthesis of CSO Contributions

- **Time:** 3:45 PM – 5:00 PM
  - **Objective:** Review CSO recommendations and finalize approaches for safeguards, gender, and benefits for IPLCs.
  - **Activities:**
    - **Group Discussions:** Critical analysis and consolidation of improvement proposals.

- **Plenary Synthesis:** Finalization of project recommendations.
  - **Facilitator:** Marine

(c) Community engagement during project implementation

The communities residing in and around the project area are the ultimate recipient of project. They are in direct contact with each park management structure. However, the project proposes community engagement at the FTNS level through two main levers, details in the SEP:

- Inclusion of civil society networks as consultatory members of the CA
- Direct access to the FTNS through the Grievance Redress Mechanism

5.6. Guidance for SEAH Risk Mitigation

In agreement with both the ESSF screening and the Gender Action Plan, a detailed plan to address SEAH risks will be developed within the first six months of project start-up, using both information already included in the GAP and updated procedures for GBV and SEAH-specific grievances outlined in the GAP. This will include:

- Inclusion of any identified GBV and SEAH-related risk mitigation measures into the project's annual workplan and budget and annual reporting requirements.
  - This will require the participation of the entire FTNS executive management in reviewing any identified risks and mitigation measures to ensure that all staff understand their responsibilities and the responsibilities of EEs, project partners, contractors, and any other entities who will receive GEF funding for this project.
- Development of a communication mechanism between the local project partners and the FTNS Safeguard & Gender Specialist in order to address in a timely manner any SEAH situation that may arise at the territorial level. This early warning system will be included in the project's security protocol, and will require:
  - Reporting any such grievances or challenges within a defined time period of no less than 5 business days. This shall hold true even if grievances are informally submitted (i.e. not through an official GRM).
  - The confidentiality of anyone who has received a complaint or become aware of a SEAH-related situation, including protecting the personal identifiable information of all parties- both the potential victim(s) and potential perpetrators(s).
- Strengthen the capacities of the project's implementing partners on gender, and on prevention of GBV and SEAH as well as WWF policies and codes of conduct to address SEAH risks.
- Strengthen the PMUs in each park so that they can establish rapid response mechanisms to address issues associated with threats to environmental leaders and gender-based violence. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - In cases of such threats, provide them with additional resources to ensure a timely response that is focused on the well-being of anyone who is threatened.
  - Provide the same GBV and SEAH training to these committees that the implementing partners will receive.
- Strengthen the capacities of the entities that participate in the multi-stakeholder bodies that will be strengthened by the project, so that specific prevention and rapid response measures are included to address GBV and SEAH-specific threats, including to social and environmental leaders they may work with.

o   Provide the same GBV and SEAH training to these multi-stakeholder bodies that the implementing partners will receive.

5.7.   Communications and Disclosure

All affected communities and relevant stakeholders shall be informed about the ESMF requirements and commitments. The executive summary of the ESMF will be translated into French and made available along with the ESMF and SEP on the websites of FTNS as well as the websites of the WWF GEF Agency. Hard copies of the ESMF will be placed in appropriate public locations and at FTNS. Project Managers and the Safeguards and Gender Specialist at FTNS will be responsible to raise community awareness regarding the requirements of the ESMF, and will also ensure that all external contractors and service providers are fully familiar and comply with the ESMF and other safeguards documents.

During the implementation of the project, activity-specific ESMPs shall be prepared in consultation with affected communities and disclosed to all stakeholders prior to project concept finalization. All draft ESMPs shall be reviewed and approved by FTNS in consultation with the PSC and WWF GEF Agency in advance of their public disclosure. FTNS Executive management must also disclose to all affected parties any action plans prepared during project implementation, including gender mainstreaming.

Disclosure should be carried out in a manner that is meaningful and understandable to the affected people. For this purpose, the executive summary of ESMPs or the terms and conditions in environment clearances should be disclosed on FTNS and WWF websites.

The disclosure requirements are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Disclosure framework for ESMF related documents

Documents to be disclosed	Frequency	Where
Environment and Social Management Framework	Once in the entire project cycle. Must remain on the website and other public locations throughout the project period.	On the website of FTNS and WWF. Copies should be available at FTNS and WWF Cameroon offices, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Environmental and Social Management Plan/s	Once in the entire project cycle for every activity that requires ESMP. Must remain on the website and other disclosure locations throughout the project period.	On the website of FTNS and WWF. Copies should be available at WWF Cameroon offices, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Safeguards Monthly Progress Report	Monthly	Copies should be available at FTNS and WWF, and in local municipal offices in project areas
Minutes of Formal Public Consultation Meetings	Within two weeks of meeting	On the website of FTNS and WWF. Copies should be available at FTNS and WWF Cameroon offices and in local municipal offices in project areas

Grievance redress process	Quarterly, throughout the project cycle	On the website of FTNS and WWF. Copies should be available at FTNS and WWF Cameroon offices

5.8. Capacity Building and technical assistance

Capacity building activities will be provided as needed by WWF US to the FTNS to provide the latter with ESMF/PF/IPPF implementation requirements and good practices. These will focus in particular on issues related to the rights of indigenous peoples, the organization of consultations, operationalization of the GRM, and monitoring of ESMF implementation. The budget for capacity building shall be included in Component 1.

5.9. Grievance Mechanisms

The project will have a direct and tangible effect on local communities and individuals residing within or in the vicinity of project sites. There is thus a need for an efficient and effective Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) that collects and responds to stakeholders' inquiries, suggestions, concerns, and complaints. This section will describe the details of the GRM, including details on the process to submit a grievance, how long FTNS Executive management will have to respond, and who on FTNS Executive management will be responsible for it's implementation and reporting. This GRM will be developed during project implementation as part of the activities to support better governance within the FTNS.

The GRM will operate based on the following principles:

1. *Fairness*: Grievances are assessed impartially, and handled transparently.

2. *Objectiveness and independence:* The GRM operates independently of all interested parties in order to guarantee fair, objective, and impartial treatment to each case.

3. *Simplicity and accessibility:* Procedures to file grievances and seek action are simple enough that project beneficiaries can easily understand them and in a language that is accessible to everyone within a given community, especially those who are most vulnerable.

4. *Responsiveness and efficiency*: The GRM is designed to be responsive to the needs of all complainants. Accordingly, officials handling grievances must be trained to take effective action upon, and respond quickly to, grievances and suggestions.

5. *Speed and proportionality:* All grievances, simple or complex, are addressed and resolved as quickly as possible. The action taken on the grievance or suggestion is swift, decisive, and constructive.

6. *Participation and inclusiveness:* A wide range of affected people—communities and vulnerable groups—are encouraged to bring grievances and comments to the attention of the project implementers. Special attention is given to ensure that poor people and marginalized groups, including those with special needs, are able to access the GRM.

7. *Accountability and closing the feedback loop:* All grievances are recorded and monitored, and no grievance remains unresolved. Complainants are always notified and get explanations regarding the results of their complaint. An appeal option shall always be available.

Complaints may include, but not be limited to, the following issues:

(i) Allegations of fraud, malpractices or corruption by staff or other stakeholders as part of any project or activity financed or implemented by the project, including allegations of gender-based violence or sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment;

(ii) Environmental and/or social damages/harms caused by projects financed or implemented (including those in progress) by the project;

(iii) Complaints and grievances by permanent or temporary workers engaged in project activities.

Complaints could relate to pollution prevention and resource efficiency; negative impacts on public health, environment or culture; destruction of natural habitats; disproportionate impact on marginalized and vulnerable groups; discrimination or physical or sexual harassment; violation of applicable laws and regulations; destruction of physical and cultural heritage; or any other issues which adversely impact communities or individuals in project areas. The grievance redress mechanism will be implemented in a culturally sensitive manner and facilitate access to vulnerable populations. Special training will be provided to the ESS Specialists within the first 6 months of project implementation, or before the GRM is finalized, whichever is sooner. This will help to ensure they have the capacity to address SEAH-related grievances in a culturally sensitive and victim-centered way.

The following items will be detailed through the project:

(1) **Disseminating information about the GRM**

(2) **Submitting complaints**

(3) **Processing complaints**

(4) **Acknowledging the receipt of complaints**

(5) **Investigating complaints**

(6) **Responding to complainants**

(7) **Appeal**

(8) **Monitoring and evaluation**

The GRM seeks complement, rather than substitute, the judicial system and other dispute resolution mechanisms. All complainants may therefore file their grievance in local courts or approach mediators or arbitrators, in accordance with the legislation of Cameroon, Republic of Congo and CAR.

In addition to the project-specific GRM, a complainant can submit a grievance to the WWF GEF Agency. A grievance can also be filed with the Project Complaints Officer (PCO), a WWF staff member fully independent from the Project Team, who is responsible for the WWF Accountability and Grievance Mechanism and who can be reached at:

Email: SafeguardsComplaint@wwfus.org

Mailing address:

> Project Complaints Officer
> Safeguards Complaints,
> World Wildlife Fund
> 1250 24th Street NW
> Washington, DC 20037

Stakeholder may also submit a complaint online through an independent third-party platform at https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/59041/index.html

5.10. Budget

The ESMF implementation costs, including all costs related to compensation to project affected people, will be fully covered from the project budget. It will be the responsibility of the Senior ESS and Gender officer to ensure that sufficient budget is available for all activity-specific mitigation measures that may be required in compliance with the ESMF.

A full time Senior ESS and Gender officer will be employed within the FTNS and 100% of their time will be dedicated to ensuring the ESMF and GAP implementation. The Executive Director in FTNS executive board will oversee the ESMF implementation with advice and quality assurance of the International technical advisor.

Budget for capacity building on ESMF/PF/IPPF implementation, travel costs and workshops and meetings for safeguards monitoring (including travel, workshops and meetings) will be included in the overall monitoring and evaluation budget under Component 1 (for safeguard implementation) and 3 (for additional support to IPLC participation) of the project.

Annex 1. Safeguard Eligibility and Impacts Screening

This screening tool needs to be filled out for each activity or category of activities included in the annual work plan and budget. In addition, the screening tool needs to be completed whenever management measures or management plans are developed and/or when project intervention areas are determined.

The tool will be filled out by the Safeguards Specialist and reviewed by the M&E Officer. The decision on whether a Site-Specific Environmental and Social Management Plan (ESMP) or Livelihood Restoration Plan (LRP) are required shall be made by the Safeguards Specialist in consultation with the WWF GEF Agency Safeguards Specialists, based on the information provided in this screening form, as well as interviews with FTNS Executive management staff, local communities, and any other relevant stakeholders.

Part 1: Basic Information

1	**Activity Name**	
	Description of Activity ("sub-activities")	
2	Type of Activity:	New activity ☐ Continuation of activity ☐
3	Activity location:	
4	Total size of site area	
5	Activity implementation dates	
6	Total cost	

(Move to Part 2 after filling in all information in the table above)

Part 2: Eligibility Screening

No.	Screening Questions: *Would the project activity*	Yes	No	Comments/ Explanation
1	Lead to land management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water? Examples include, but are not limited to: the felling of trees in core zones and critical watersheds; activities involving quarrying and mining; commercial logging; or dredge fishing.		x	
2	Negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/endangered species?		x	
3	Significantly increase GHG emissions?		x	
4	Use genetically modified organisms or modern biotechnologies or their products?		x	
5	Involve the procurement and/or use of pesticides and other chemicals specified as persistent organic pollutants under the Stockholm Convention or within categories IA, IB, or II by the World Health Organization?		x	

No.	Screening Questions: *Would the project activity*	Yes	No	Comments/ Explanation
6	Develop forest plantations?		x	
7	Result in the loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species?		x	
8	Involve the procurement or use of weapons and munitions or fund military activities?		x	
9	Lead to private land acquisition and/or the to physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation of people, including non-titled and migrant people?		x	
10	Contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist?		x	
11	Involve illegal child labor, forced labor, sexual exploitation or other forms of exploitation?		x	
12	Adversely affect indigenous peoples' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area?		x	
13	Negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities?		x	
Please provide any further information that can be relevant:				

If all answers are "No", project activity is eligible and move to Part 3

If at least one question answered as "yes", the project activity is ineligible and the proponent can reselect the site of project activity and do screening again.

Part 3: Impacts screening

Answer the questions below and follow the guidance to provide basic information regarding the suggested activity and describe its potential impacts.

No.	Would the project activity:	Yes/No	Provide explanation and supporting documents if needed
Environmental Impacts			
1	Result in permanent or temporary change in land use, land cover or topography.	yes	
2	Involve clearance of existing land vegetation	no	If yes, number of trees to be cut down: Species of trees: Are the trees protected: Total land area of vegetation cover removed: Estimated economic value of the trees, crops and vegetation to be cut down / removed and any replacement costs (e.g., fees, registration, taxes): *Provide additional details:*

3	Does the activity involve reforestation or modification of natural habitat? If yes, will it involve use or introduction of non-native species into the project area?	yes	
4	Will pesticides be used? If so, are they on the list of those excluded by the Stockholm Convention?	no	
5	Result in environmental pollution? This may include air pollution, liquid waste, solid waste, or waste as the result of earth moving or excavation for example	no	
6	Trigger land disturbance, erosion, subsidence, or instability?	no	
7	Result in significant use of water, such as for construction?	no	
8	Produce dust during construction and operation?	no	
9	Generate significant ambient noise?	no	
10	Increase the sediment load in the local water bodies?	no	
11	Change on-site or downstream water flows?	no	
12	Negatively affect water dynamics, river connectivity or the hydrological cycle in ways other than direct changes of water flows (e.g. water filtration and aquifer recharge, sedimentation)?	no	
13	Result in negative impacts to any endemic, rare or threatened species; species that have been identified as significant through global, regional, national, or local laws?	no	
14	Could the activity potentially increase the vulnerability of local communities to climate variability and changes (e.g., through risks and events such as landslides, erosion, flooding, or droughts)?	no	
Socio-Economic Impacts			
15	Negatively impact existing tenure rights (formal and informal) of individuals, communities or others to land, fishery and forest resources?	yes	
16	Operate where there are indigenous peoples and their lands/territories/waters a- are located?	Yes a-	

	OR Operate where any indigenous communities have close cultural/spiritual or land use relationships? If yes to either, answer questions below:		
	a. Has an FPIC process been started? b. Will any restrictions on their use of land/territories/water/natural resources be restricted?	Yes Yes	
17	Restrict access to natural resources (e.g., watersheds or rivers, grazing areas, forestry, non-timber forest products) or restrict the way natural resources are used, in ways that will impact livelihoods?	yes	
18	Restrict access to sacred sites of local communities (including ethnic minorities) and/or places relevant for women's or men's religious or cultural practices?	yes	
19	Operate where there are any cultural heritage or religious or sacred sites that may be impacted by the project?	yes	
20	Undermine the customary rights of local communities to participate in consultations in a free, prior, and informed manner to address interventions directly affecting their lands, territories or resources?	yes	
	Labor and Working Conditions		
21	Involve hiring of workers or contracting with labor agencies to provide labor? If yes, answer questions a-b below.	no	
	c. Are labor management issues prevalent in the landscape? d. Are illegal child labor issues prevalent in the landscape?		
22	Involve working in hazardous environments such as steep, rocky slopes, areas infested with poisonous animals and/or disease vectors?	no	

	Minorities and Vulnerable Groups		
23	Negatively affect vulnerable groups (such as ethnic minorities, women, poorer households, migrants, and assistant herders) in terms of impact on their economic or social life conditions or contribute to their discrimination or marginalization?	yes	
24	Stir or exacerbate conflicts among communities, groups or individuals? Also considering dynamics of recent or expected migration including displaced people, as well as those who are most vulnerable to threats of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment.	yes	
	Occupational and Community Health and Safety		
25	Involve any risks related to the usage of construction materials, working high above the ground or in canals where slopes are unstable?	no	
26	Expose local community to risks related to construction works or use of machinery (e.g., loading and unloading of construction materials, excavated areas, fuel storage and usage, electrical use, machinery operations)	no	
27	Generate societal conflicts, increased risk of sexual exploitation, abuse or harassment or pressure on local resources between temporary workers and local communities?	yes	
28	Work in areas where forest fires are a threat? If yes, how recently was the last one?	yes	
29	Work in areas where there the presence or history of vector-borne diseases (some examples include malaria, yellow fever, encephalitis)	yes	
	GBV/SEAH Risks		
30	Is there a risk that the project could pose a greater burden on women by restricting the use, development, and protection of	yes	

	natural resources by women compared with that of men?		
31	Is there a risk that persons employed by or engaged directly in the project might engage in gender-based violence (including sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, or sexual harassment)? The response must consider risks not only at the beneficiary level, but also to workers within all the organizations receiving GBFF funding.	yes	
32	Does the project increase the risk of GBV and/or SEAH for women and girls, for example by changing resource use practices or singling out women and girls for training without complimentary training/education for men? The response must consider all workers within the organizations receiving GBFF funding.	yes	
33	Does any mandated training for any individuals associated with the project (including project staff, government officials, park rangers and guards, other park staff, consultants, partner organizations and contractors) cover GBV/SEAH (along with human rights, etc.)?	yes	
	Conflict Sensitivity and Risks		
34	Are there any major underlying tensions or open conflicts in the landscape/seascape or in the country where the landscape/seascape is situated? If yes, answer a-d below	yes	
	e. Is there a risk that the activities interact with or exacerbate existing tensions and conflicts in the landscape/seascape? f. Do stakeholders (e.g. implementing partners, rights holders, other stakeholder groups) take a specific position in relation to the conflicts or tensions in the landscape/seascape or are they perceived as taking a position? g. How do stakeholders perceive WWF Country Office and IA and its partners in	Yes Yes As part of potential conflicts yes	

	relation to existing conflicts or tensions? h. Could the conflicts or tensions in the landscape/seascape have a negative impact on the activities?		
35	Could the activities create conflicts among communities, groups or individuals?	yes	
36	Are some groups (stakeholders, rights holders) benefiting more than others from the activities? And if so, how is that affecting power dynamics and mutual dependencies?	yes	
37	Do the activities provide opportunities to bring different groups with diverging interests positively together?	yes	

List of documents to be attached with Screening form:

1	Layout plan of the activity and photos
2	Summary of the activity proposal
3	No objection certificate from various departments and others relevant stakeholders

Screening Tool Completed by:

Signed:

Name: _____

Title:_____

Date: _____

_____

Screening Conclusions [TO BE COMPLETED BY Safeguards Specialist]

    i. Main environmental issues are:

    ii. Permits/ clearance needed are:

    iii. Main social issues are:

iv. Further assessment/ investigation needed and next step.
   a.   Need for any special study:……..

   b.   Preparation of ESMP (main issue to be addressed by the ESMP):………..

   c.   Preparation of LRP (main issue to be addressed by the LRP):………..

   d.   Any other requirements/ need/ issue etc:

Screening Tool Reviewed by:

Signed:

Name: _____

Title:_____

Date: _____

Exclusion list

The following practices and activities will not be supported by the project:

1. Land or water management practices that cause degradation (biological or physical) of the soil and water.

2. Activities that negatively affect areas of critical natural habitats or breeding ground of known rare/ endangered species.

3. Actions that represent significant increase in GHG emissions.

4. Use of genetically modified organisms, or the supply or use of modern biotechnologies or their products in crops.

5. Introduction of crops and varieties that previously did not grow in the implementation areas, including seed import/transfer.

6. Actions resulting in loss of biodiversity, alteration of the functioning of ecosystems, and introduction of new invasive alien species.

7. Procurement of pesticides or activities that result in an increase in the use of pesticides.

8. Activities that would lead to physical displacement and voluntary or involuntary relocation.

9. Activities that do not consider gender aspects or contribute to exacerbating any inequality or gender gap that may exist.

10. Child Labor.

11. Activities that would adversely affect IPs' rights, lands, natural resources, territories, livelihoods, knowledge, social fabric, traditions, governance systems, and culture or heritage (physical and non-physical or intangible) inside and/or outside the project area.

12. Activities that would negatively impact areas with cultural, historical or transcendent values for individuals and communities.